

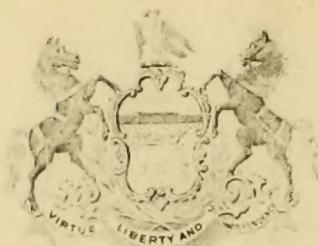
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VOLUME I



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HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FIELD  
SERVICE IN FRANCE





# MARECHAL JOFFRE

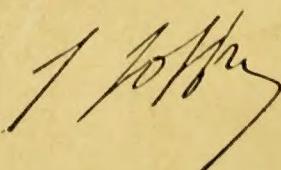


Paris le 28 Mars 1919.

C'est aux actes qu'on reconnaît les vrais amis. A friend in need is a friend indeed.-

Quelles autres paroles pourrait-on inscrire au frontispice de ce livre "Les Amis de la France", vrai breviaire d'héroïque charité et de joyeuse abnégation.

En feuilletant ces pages je crois entendre la voix de ces milliers de blessés français ramassés sur les bords de la Marne par les ambulances de l'"American Field Service", descendus des pentes de l'Hartmannsweiler, tirés des boues de la Flandre, arrachés à l'enfer de Verdun. Qu'il soit permis à un ami de l'Amérique de se faire ici leur interprète et de dire aux "Amis de la France" à ces hardis volontaires d'Avant-Garde, la gratitude infinie de son Pays.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joffre".





*History of the*  
*American Field Service in France*

“FRIENDS OF FRANCE”

1914 – 1917

TOLD BY ITS MEMBERS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

*Volume I*



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

1920

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MEMORIAL  
EDITION

TO  
**OUR MOTHERS**

*before whose silent Sacrifice,  
deep hidden in their Hearts,  
our Part seems mere Adventure.*



191268

ДИАЛУГИ С КЕР  
УРАЯНЦЫ ПАТС



## PREFATORY NOTE

THE American Field Service, as a group of youths serving the French Army in the Great War, is a thing of the past. And this is its history. The reader must not assume, however, that the American Field Service no longer exists, or that there will never be occasion for record of its further accomplishment. Although the members when they enlisted in 1915, 1916, and 1917, only pledged themselves to the French Army for a limited period, it is within the truth to state that, whether or not they realized it at the time, they enlisted for life in the service of France.

Even before this record has gone to the press, and while the United States is still nominally at war, the peace plans of the Field Service are well under way — plans for the perpetuation under its auspices of fraternal relations among French and American youth for generations to come. A series of American Field Service fellowships for American students in French Universities has already been established, and projects have been formulated which it is hoped will ultimately result in securing a permanent endowment for a Field Service fellowship in memory of each and every one of the one hundred and twenty-six Field Service men who gave their lives during the war — either a fellowship for an American student in a French university, or a fellowship for a

## PREFATORY NOTE

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French student in an American university. These fellowships not only will furnish fitting memorials of the Field Service men whose lives were sacrificed to the Allied Cause, but will give living and enduring impulse to the advancement of understanding and friendship between France and the United States, which was ever the fundamental Field Service aim.

The section histories, diaries, letters, and sketches comprising these volumes, are entirely the contributions of men who were part of the American Field Service. Many of these were collected at the Paris headquarters during the early days, but it was not until the Service ceased to exist as a volunteer organization that any effort was made to compile them with a view to producing a complete record comprising all the activities of the Service. While the volume published under the name of *Friends of France*, in 1916, contained numerous accounts of the work of the early days — many of them being here reprinted — that volume was of necessity more or less provisional and incomplete. The aim of these volumes is to fill in the gaps and finish the story, to give the final record of all the sections, new as well as old, and of the work of the many hundreds of younger volunteers as well as of the pioneers of 1915 and 1916.

As in *Friends of France* the stories of the several sections have been composed in the main of excerpts from articles, diaries, and home letters of different members, a method of composition necessarily involving some duplication and incoherence. It is believed, however, that this is compensated for by the veracity of the first-hand material so presented, and that whatever the history may have lost in smoothness and unity is offset by a gain in sincerity, animation, and originality.

Among those to whom thanks are due for successively assisting in the compilation of this work are Dr. Raymond Weeks, of the Paris staff, Mr. Frank J. Taylor, of Section Ten, Mr. Theodore Stanton and Captain

## PREFATORY NOTE

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Arthur J. Putnam and Mr. Robert A. Donaldson, of Section Seventy. The final selection and revision of the material has been mainly the work of Lieutenant James W. D. Seymour, of Section Seventeen.

Grateful appreciation is owing to the French artists André Fraye, Charles Huard, and Bernard Naudin, and to the following men of the Field Service, Waldo Peirce, S.S.U. 3, C. Le Roy Baldridge, T.M.U., F. L. Sexton, S.S.U. 14, George W. Hall, S.S.U. 70, and Harry de Maine, who contributed the many drawings which decorate and brighten these pages.

To those men of the Service who have contributed articles, poems, and photographs, and to many parents and friends who have aided by forwarding material from home letters and diaries, thanks are also due.

THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

*April, 1920*





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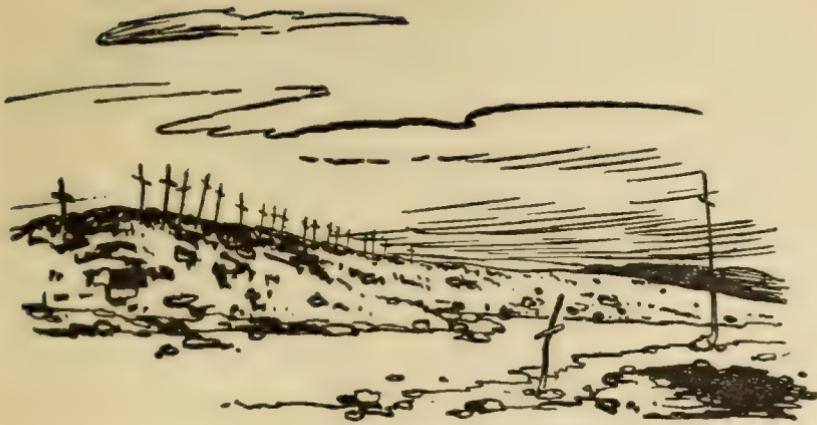
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HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FIELD  
SERVICE IN FRANCE

..

*Introduction*

I & II. A. PIATT ANDREW  
III. HENRY D. SLEEPER  
IV. STEPHEN GALATTI





## *The American Field Service in France*

### I

#### THE SERVICE

Les États Unis d'Amérique n'ont pas oublié que la première page de l'histoire de leur indépendance a été écrite avec un peu de sang français.

MARÉCHAL JOFFRE, 1916

THE American Field Service may justly claim four titles of distinction. It anticipated American troops on the battle-fields of France and the Balkans by more than two and a half years; it contributed appreciably during these years to the enlightenment of American opinion in regard to the crucial meaning of the war; it furnished subsequently to the American Expeditionary Forces a small nucleus of officers and men of quality and devotion; and last, but not least from the viewpoint of its members, it had the happy fortune of serving with and being part of the matchless armies of France.

It is worthy of remembrance that the little group of American volunteers told of in this book, numbering at no one time much more than two thousand, formed, for

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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the first three years of the Great War, the most considerable organized representation which the United States had on the battle front. A few of them had seen service in the first battle of the Marne in September, 1914, and thereafter, as their number increased, there was seldom an important battle anywhere along the French front in which they had not their little part.

As early as April, 1915, this volunteer service was organized in sections of twenty-five or thirty men on the pattern of the regular ambulance sections of the French Army and incorporated for administrative purposes in the Automobile Service of that army. Each section was assigned to a particular division of the army, forming thereafter an integral part of the division, being so considered and treated by its troops and officers, and ordinarily moving by road or by train from one sector in the line to another with the division. These Field Service ambulance sections multiplied before the American Army came to France until they numbered thirty-four, which meant that an equal number of divisions of the French Army depended upon the American Field Service for practically all of their sanitary transport. It may be said without exaggeration that there was no sector in which French troops served where they were not known, and that there was scarcely a *poilu* who had not seen the American cars and who had not formed some sort of acquaintance among the American volunteer drivers. In 1915, the little American ambulances driven by volunteers could be seen scurrying everywhere over the flat plains of Flanders during the battles of Ypres and the Yser. They were seen also on the wooded hills of northern Lorraine during the violent engagements in Bois le Prêtre, and they were equally familiar in the mountains and valleys of reconquered Alsace during the battles of the Fecht and Hartmannsweilerkopf.

In 1916, throughout the prolonged and terrible battle of Verdun, they were in evidence everywhere in that sector from the Woevre to the Argonne, and in the autumn of

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that year, two of the Field Service sections, endowed with double equipment, were sent to the Balkans, where they worked during the following year with the French troops in the mountainous regions of northern Greece, Serbia, and Albania.

The year 1917 found Field Service sections also in every great engagement from the April battle in Champagne to the October battle of the Chemin des Dames, and during this latter year some eight hundred additional volunteers of the Field Service, organized in fourteen *camion* sections, were engaged in the transport of ammunition and military supplies in connection with the last-named campaign. All of this occurred, let it be remembered, while the United States was officially represented on the front by only an occasional military *attaché* or observer.

### FRENCH APPRECIATION

THE actual and direct service to France of these men, when measured by the monstrous task with which France had to cope during the first three years of the war, was of course insignificant, but they rendered an inestimable benefit to their own country, for they helped to keep alive in France the old feelings of friendship and of respect for us which had existed there since our earliest days and which otherwise might easily have disappeared. They helped to demonstrate to the soldiers and people of France that, notwithstanding official silence and injunctions of prudence, Americans had already begun to appreciate the meaning, not only to France, but to all the world, of the issues that were at stake, and that many American hearts and hopes were already with France in her gigantic struggle.

Numerous and appreciative were the expressions of this assurance by representative men of France at that time. An officer upon General Joffre's staff in December, 1916, wrote as follows:

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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The American Field Service is the finest flower of the magnificent wreath offered by the great America to her little Latin sister. Those, who like you and your friends have consecrated themselves entirely to our cause, up to and including the supreme sacrifice, deserve more than our gratitude. We cannot think of them in the future as other than our own.

The distinguished statesman and historian, Gabriel Hanotaux, in a public address of about the same date, paid tribute to the Field Service in these terms:

Friends of France! your every act, your every heartbeat of the past two years gives the proof! You have left everything to live among us, to share our sorrows and our joys, to aid our soldiers at the risk of your own lives. Like our Joan of Arc you have felt "the great pity that there is in this country of France." For your love and your eagerness to help, accept our benediction.

Monsieur Jusserand, Ambassador of France to the United States, sent across the ocean this message of gratitude:

Lives saved by thousands, suffering attenuated, amputations avoided, families spared their fathers for after the war; these form only a part of the French debt toward the American Field Service.

Scores of other equally representative and similarly grateful tributes might be quoted, but perhaps no more convincing evidence of the attitude of France to the Field Service is to be found than the fact that in the days when American troops were not yet on the front, the French Army decorated the American Field Service sections no less than nineteen times and conferred either the *Croix de Guerre*, the *Légion d'Honneur*, or the *Medaille Militaire* upon no less than two hundred and fifty of their members.

This is perhaps not surprising if one takes account of the character of the personnel. For, if America cannot take pride in the number of her representatives in France during the first three years of the war, she can at least



"WHEN COMRADES WERE LAID ETERNALLY TO REST"  
FUNERAL OF RICHARD HALL, KILLED CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1916



## INTRODUCTION

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be satisfied with their quality. I doubt whether any other such group of men could have been found in any formation in any of the armies engaged in the war. The English poet, John Masefield, after visiting a number of Field Service sections in the summer of 1916, described them as including "the very pick and flower of American youth." Many hundreds of the members were graduates or students of American colleges and universities and many bore names distinguished in American literary and political history. Some of them had been business men, lawyers, and doctors; some had been architects and bankers; some had been teachers; and some even had been clergymen; but, not willing any longer to remain inert and distant onlookers in the great world struggle, they had left their schools and colleges, their offices, shops, and pulpits in order to come to France and do what they could, were it only in the most humble capacity, to help her armies. President Sills, of Bowdoin College, well described the character and motives of the early Field Service volunteers in his inaugural address delivered shortly after the first contingent of the United States Army had arrived in France:

Long before our troops were in France, earlier even than the messengers of mercy from the Red Cross went in large numbers, the drivers in the American Ambulance Field Service showed France that chivalry was not dead in America, and carried to the gallant and hard-pressed French people the sympathy of the United States that was never neutral. . . . They anticipated Pershing's admirable phrase, "We are here, Lafayette." And while among them and in the Foreign Legion there were many athletes and many with technical training, there were also surprisingly many who were impelled to go by that idealism that is bred of literature and science and art. Some of them, like that noble Dartmouth lad who gave his life Christmas night, lie there, the advance guard of that goodly company,

"Who gave their merry youth away  
For the Country and for God."





## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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as the ambulance branch, but with two special training-camps of its own, was also a tried and working proposition which had been rendering helpful and appreciated service with the French Army for several months. The French authorities were anxious that both formations should be continued and that the entry of the United States in the war should not result in any interruption of either of these services upon which they had come to count. Maréchal Joffre, in his trip to the States in the spring of 1917, appealed to the American Government to this end, and as a result of his appeal, it was agreed in Washington that both branches of the Field Service should be adopted by the American Army and reloaned to France, so that they could go on functioning as they had before, only under official American auspices. During the autumn of 1917, accordingly, the ambulance sections, then numbering thirty-three, were incorporated in the United States Army Ambulance Service with the French Army, and the *camion* sections, numbering fourteen (the so-called *Réserve Mallet*), were militarized as the American Mission with the French Army of the Motor Transport Corps. A majority of the Field Service volunteer drivers willingly enlisted in the United States Army in order that the entity and work of their sections might continue. The Field Service officers were regularly commissioned. The Field Service ambulances and other cars, numbering nearly a thousand, were turned over to the United States Army, and the sections thus went on serving with the French Army without change or interruption. The only exception concerned the Field Service ambulance sections in the Balkans, which the American Army would not accept or take over for the ostensible reason that the United States was not then at war with Austria-Hungary and could not accordingly have even non-combatant troops in service with the armies that were opposing the Austrians. We were therefore obliged, however reluctantly, to withdraw the personnel of these sections, but not before giving their cars, tents, and abundant equip-



A. PIATT ANDREW



## INTRODUCTION

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ment directly to the French Army of the Orient, which thus continued their service, in the hands of a French personnel, until the end of the war.

It is worthy of note that while neither the American ambulance nor transport adjuncts of the French Army, which rendered such excellent service in France during the last year of the war, would probably have existed except for their previous formation under the Field Service, both were not only continued under the auspices of the American Army, but were very considerably enlarged under those auspices during that final year. Before the war ended, the American ambulance sections serving with the French Army had increased to eighty-one and the *camion* sections so serving to twenty-four.

With the arrival of the American Army in France, as more varied opportunities for participation in the war became available, many of the old Field Service volunteers sought service in other branches of the army, such as aviation, infantry, and the artillery, for which they felt themselves better qualified by individual endowment or previous training and experience. In addition, therefore, to the hundreds of officers and men which the Field Service contributed to the American ambulance and motor transport corps serving with the armies of France, it also contributed quotas to almost every other part of the American Expeditionary Forces, and in fact to several services of the allied armies as well. The records of many of the men in these services not only brought distinction to themselves, but reflected some of that distinction upon the mother organization under which they began their service in France. A hundred and twenty-seven Field Service men, whose names are listed on a Roll of Honor elsewhere in these volumes, gave in the course of the war all that they had or could hope for, and several times that number suffered mutilation and wounds.

We know of approximately eight hundred former Field

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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Service volunteers who subsequently held commissions in the United States Army, Navy, or Marine Corps, and in addition we have record of one hundred and three who were officers or *aspirants* in the French artillery and aviation, and of twenty-two who were officers in the British Army, principally in the Royal Flying Corps. In all, the total number of Field Service men serving as officers and privates in the French and British Armies was close to two hundred.

### BUILDERS OF THE SERVICE

THE success of the Field Service was due, not merely nor primarily to the hundreds of youths who constituted its ranks in the field. It was due, in the first instance, to the concerted effort of a multitude of men and women scattered throughout the length and breadth of the United States. In schools and colleges, in clubs and churches, in business houses and trade organizations of every sort, with unremitting effort they secured the funds and recruits which for three years made the Service possible, and which at the rate of their accumulation in April, 1917 (had America not entered the war at that time), were destined shortly to make of the Field Service an institution of very formidable proportions. To these friends of the Field Service in America, any one of whom would gladly have welcomed the opportunity to do what the volunteers on the front were doing, gratitude for the achievement of the Field Service is as much owing as to the men who served in France. Particularly is appreciation due in this connection to Mr. Henry D. Sleeper, the American representative of the Service, who during these years with unflagging energy organized the committees and spread from one end of America to the other the information which resulted so successfully in providing men and money for the work in France.

Whatever success the Field Service sections may have achieved in the field was equally owing to the devoted

## INTRODUCTION

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effort of the staff in France who, during month after month and year after year, gave themselves without stint, caring for and training the men as they arrived from America in ever-increasing and often unexpected numbers, looking after the assembling and construction of ambulances, finding and shipping the endless supplies needed by the sections, handling perplexing matters of personal discipline and complicated relations with various branches of the French administration, and meeting, so far as possible, the innumerable individual problems presented by several thousand young volunteers in a foreign army in a foreign land. We passed through many tense and difficult days together, and I shall never forget their loyal and faithful coöperation. Above all, and without any risk of invidious distinction, must be mentioned Mr. Stephen Galatti, who reluctantly left his section at the front at the end of 1915 in order to help in the administration of the Service, and to whose unswerving loyalty, unfailing optimism, tireless patience, and wise counsel during the years that followed, the Service owes an inestimable debt.

### OUR MEMORIES

In the narratives and impressions that follow will be found something of the life and work of the Field Service volunteers before American troops had come to France. The participants themselves tell their own stories, and by collecting and editing these stories, it is hoped to hand down to the future, not only the record of what the Field Service was and accomplished during the first years of the Great War, but also a considerable number of first-hand observations of what life at the front with the French armies was like during these years.

Writers of greater training have given the world graphic pictures of the more famous scenes of battle,—of the tragic days of the Yser, of the Somme, of Champagne, of Verdun, of the Chemin des Dames,—in all of which Field Service sections had their small part; but there

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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are less known events and places deeply graven in the memories of Field Service men which also deserve to be perpetuated and to be sung. Many of the pages that follow will quicken the recollection of such days and places among the men who "were there," even though they may give only faint impressions to those whose reading is unsupported by experiences recalled. What throngs of varied memories troop by again as one turns over the pages! Memories of farewell dinners long ago at old "21," when sections, on the eve of their departure for the front, were bid Godspeed by well-known men of France and America; memories of the excitement of section departures, in particular of the nights in October and December, 1916, when Section Three and Section Ten embarked for their great adventure in the Orient, and of that May morning in 1917 when the first *Camion* Section marched down through the Passy grounds, under arms, *en route* for Dommiers; memories of days of eager anticipation at the training-camps by the old water-mill at May-en-Multien, in the forest at Dommiers, or in the château grounds at Chavigny, the last two of which have long since been reduced to dust and wreckage by the sweep of battle; memories of mysterious nights spent under whistling shells in *postes* crowded with wounded *poilus* at Esnes, at Bras, at Vendresse, at Hartmannsweilerkopf, and scores of other places; memories of hours of unutterable sorrow when comrades who had fallen were laid eternally to rest; memories of happy days of decorations and *défilés*, like that last ceremony in which the Field Service as such took part, when her *camion* volunteers were decorated on the *champ de manœuvre* of Soissons in the cold twilight of November 12, 1917!

The American Field Service has passed into history, and the Great War itself is a closed volume. Fortunate is it, indeed, if here are gathered together a few reminders of our work and our companions, of our joys and our sorrows in the great days that are no more.



*Sketched at the Planting Hermitage A. Webster, S.S.U. 2*

"MYSTERIOUS NIGHTS . . . UNDER WHISTLING SHELLS AT ESSNES"



### THE FIELD SERVICE AND FRANCE

WHEN all is said and done, the Field Service volunteers themselves gained far more than the wounded *poilus*, far more than the armies of France, far more than any one else, from the work which they performed.

Even in ordinary times it is a privilege to live in this "*doux pays de France*," to move about among its gentle and finished landscapes, in the presence of its beautiful architectural heritages and in daily contact with its generous, sensitive, and highly gifted people. Life in France, even in ordinary times, means to those of almost any other country daily suggestions of courtesy, refinement, and thoughtful consideration for others. It means continual suggestions of an intelligent perspective in the art of living and in the things that give life dignity and worth.

But the opportunity of living in France, as we Americans lived during the first years of the war, meant all this and more. It meant glimpses of human nature shorn of self, exalted by love of country, singing and jesting in the midst of hardships, smiling at pain, unmindful even of death. It meant contact with the most gentle and most intelligent of modern peoples facing incredible suffering, prolonged and prodigious sacrifices, mortal peril — facing them with silent, unshakable resolve, victoriously resisting them with modesty and never a vaunting word. It meant visions of courage, resignation, and heroism as fine as any that history records. Nothing else surely can ever offer so much of noble inspiration as those glimpses of the moral grandeur of unconquerable France.

The epic and heroic quality of France's whole history, and especially of that chapter of which we were eyewitnesses, the quenchless spirit and unfaltering will of her people, the democracy, the comradeship, and above all, the calm, unboasting, matter-of-fact courage of her troops, kindled something akin to veneration in all of us. The Field Service motto was, "*Tous et tout pour la*

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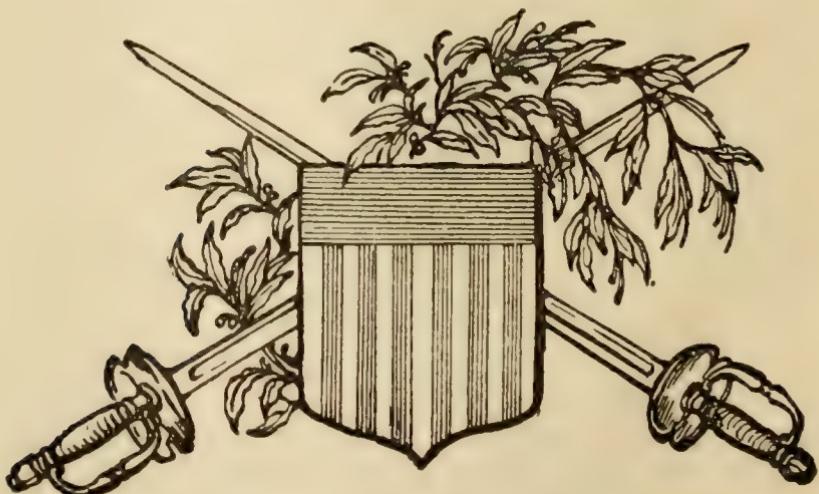
*France.*" We all felt it. We all meant it. It is forever ours.

In serving with the armies of France, the men of the old Field Service enjoyed a privilege of unique and inestimable value, a privilege the memory of which will remain not only a cherished heritage, but a living influence as long as any of us survive.

A. PIATT ANDREW<sup>1</sup>

*France, March, 1919*

<sup>1</sup> Organizer and head of the American Field Service. Served in France continuously from December, 1914, until May, 1919. Commissioned a Major, U.S.A. Ambulance Service, and subsequently a Lieutenant-Colonel. The Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces awarded him the Distinguished Service Medal with this citation: "For exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services. Coming to France at the beginning of the war, he showed remarkable ability in organizing the American Field Service, a volunteer service for the transportation of the wounded of the French Armies at the front. Upon the entry of the United States into the war, he turned over to the U.S. Army Ambulance Service the efficient organization he had built up, and by his sound judgment and expert advice, rendered invaluable aid in the development of that organization. To him is due, in large measure, the credit for the increasingly valuable work done by the light ambulances at the front."



ACTA MANENT

## II

### SOME OF THE EARLY PROBLEMS

It is not France alone that they serve. They are paying for all Americans a small instalment on the great debt of gratitude that we have owed the French people since the very beginning of our national life.

MYRON T. HERRICK, 1916

Most of the American war activities in France that preceded the entrance of the United States into the war can trace some sort of parentage to the small American hospital in Neuilly-sur-Seine, that had been maintained by members of the American colony in Paris for some years before the war. As this semi-charitable institution was located in the immediate vicinity of Paris, and included among its supporters and directors a large number of the American residents of the French capital, it naturally, at the outbreak of hostilities, became the rallying centre for all Americans, who, as residents, travellers, or students, happened to be in Paris at the time, and who wanted to do something to help.

Money and hospital supplies were donated; automobiles were given and lent; men and women of all sorts offered their services; and within a few weeks, even before the Germans had reached the Marne, a large hospital for French wounded had been equipped and opened in the Lycée Pasteur in Neuilly, another hospital was in process of organization near Meaux, and a number of ambulances, rudely extemporized from touring cars, limousines, and automobile *chassis*, were ready to bring in the wounded, which, early in September, the rapidly moving battle flood brought close to the city.

All of these endeavors began in the name of and under the auspices of the little *ante-bellum* American Hospital of Neuilly, which can claim the signal honor of having initiated American war relief work in France. They had the distinguished support and active leadership of the

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American ambassador, Mr. Myron T. Herrick, and of his predecessor, Mr. Robert Bacon.

In the months that followed, with the crystallization of the front, and the resultant prospect of a prolonged war, the efforts of the American residents in France were supplemented rapidly and in ever-increasing proportions by men and funds from America. The American effort began also to differentiate itself, to specialize its tasks and its personnel, and one after another many, who had been associated with the American hospital at the outset, withdrew from it, in order to develop new opportunities for service, — now to establish a new American hospital at Montdidier (Mr. Herman Harjes); now to organize a hospital at Ris Orangis (Dr. Joseph A. Blake); now to direct a group of automobile ambulances in Belgium (Mr. Francis T. Colby); now to head a group of ambulances with the British (Mr. Richard Norton); now to institute a service for the distribution of relief (Mrs. Robert Bliss); and now to systematize and facilitate the import of supplies from America (Dr. Watson and Mr. Charles Carroll).

In the winter of 1914-15 a score or two of the donated automobile ambulances, which, because of the withdrawal of the front after the battle of the Marne, were no longer needed by the American Ambulance Hospital in Neuilly, had been temporarily lent with American volunteers as drivers, to French and British hospitals somewhat in the rear of the army zone at Paris Plage, Hesdin, Abbéville, Saint-Pol, Beauvais, and Dunkirk. But this work, however useful it may have been, was not of a character to appeal to enthusiastic and ardent young Americans, who were physically able and morally eager to share more of war's hardships and dangers. Many young Americans were already stirring with the desire to participate in the great world drama, yet they could not do so as combatants without sacrifice of their nationality. Admirers of France in America were becoming more and more numerous and generous and were seeking opportunities

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to contribute aid to the French armies. Every circumstance of the time pointed to the possibility of successfully developing an ambulance service, conducted by American volunteers, and supported by American donors, but working directly in the French army zone as part and parcel of the French Army.

This was the goal toward which some of us began directing our hopes and our energies in the late winter of 1914-15. But before launching an appeal in America for men and money for this special purpose certain preliminary and somewhat formidable obstacles in France had to be overcome. First of all, the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army had to be persuaded of the advisability of allowing representatives of a neutral country, not merely to circulate in the army zone, but, what was far more irregular, to serve as actual members of a French division. One can easily understand that the French General Headquarters hesitated before such a proposal, envisaged the difficulties, and asked for certain assurances. These young Americans were coming from a country whose people at that time were, to some extent at least, divided on the issues of the war, and whose Government had given no indication of friendliness to France. If they were not to forego their allegiance to their native land, they could not be subjected, like French soldiers, to the sterner forms of discipline, such as court-martial, nor to the more severe forms of punishment. They could not, like French citizens, be asked to engage themselves for such an indefinite period as the duration of the war. Above all, the French Army had to protect itself against the possible presence within its lines of men of disloyal inclinations.

We recognized these grounds for hesitation and tried to meet them. We offered formal assurance that no candidates would be accepted without at least three letters from men of standing in their communities, testifying to their character and unquestioned loyalty to the Allied cause, which letters would be kept on file at our Head-

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quarters subject at all times to examination by the French authorities; that each candidate would sign an initial engagement for at least six months' service, to be renewable thereafter for periods of at least three months; that he would also sign a promise not to communicate any information of military significance that might come to his knowledge during his period of service; and finally, that during this period he would "be subject to French military discipline." This latter agreement was probably unenforceable, since any member of the Service, who had not forsaken his allegiance to his country, might still have appealed to the American Government for protection against the execution of a French military punishment, but fortunately it was never put to the test. During our three years of service there was never a question of espionage or disloyalty among our volunteers, nor were there any cases of serious infraction of military discipline. Among all of the thousands of members of the Service I recall only one instance where a volunteer, imprisoned by French military authority for some misdemeanor, appealed to the American Ambassador for relief from his punishment, and this was settled amicably by a prompt dishonorable discharge from the Service of the youthful offender.

### AGREEMENT WITH FRENCH G.Q.G.

EARLY in April, 1915, the French General Headquarters paid us the gratifying tribute of accepting our offer and our assurances, and authorized the incorporation in the French Army of such volunteer sections as we might be able to provide. These sections were to be constituted, as to personnel, material, and equipment, upon exactly the same model as the regular French Army ambulance sections (except that the men and cars were to be furnished by us), and they were to function in exactly the same way. The agreement thus signed by the French Headquarters in the early months of the war is of sufficient interest and significance to justify the publication of its terms in full.



COMMANDANT DOUMENC



## INTRODUCTION

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The following translation was made from the original text as slightly modified by subsequent orders.

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### MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE UTILIZATION IN THE ARMIES OF THE SANITARY SECTIONS PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GENERAL-IN-CHIEF BY THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

#### GENERAL PROVISIONS

(A) These sections shall have the same elements (material and personnel) as are provided for the French sections of the same type and shall be similarly constituted in administrative units.

(B) A French officer of the automobile service will be appointed commander of each formation. Attached to this officer will be a representative of the American Field Service in charge of the relations between the A.F.S. and the section. He will have the title of Assistant Commander (*Commandant Adjoint*) and will be charged with transmitting to the American drivers the orders of the French officer and insuring discipline among the American drivers.

#### ENLISTMENT CONTRACT — DISCIPLINE

(A) The volunteers must enlist for a period of six months with their Organizing Committee, with the privilege of renewing their enlistment for periods of at least three months. Before leaving for the section they must hand to Captain Aujay (Office of Foreign Sanitary Sections) a signed copy of their enlistment. From this time they shall be subject to French military discipline.

(B) In addition to their passports, the American volunteers must be provided while in the army zone with a "*carnet d'étranger*" delivered by the *B.M.S.E.*.

(C) They will have the right to "*permissions*," regulated as follows:

Seven days at the expiration of each period of three months' presence in their formation.

Fourteen days at the expiration of each period of nine months' presence in their formation.

Fifteen days before the expiration of each period of enlistment, the American drivers will be invited by the French officer commanding the section to choose between their liberation at the end of the current period and the signature of a new engagement. In the first case no "*permission*" will be granted before liberation; in the second case the usual "*permission*" will be allowed.

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(D) They will wear the uniform adopted by the American Field Service, with the grenades of the Automobile Service, in wool or silk for drivers, in gold or silver for the Assistant Commander. They should in no case wear the insignia of rank in use in the Allied Armies.

(E) The French Chief of Section will have the right to request from the Chief of the Automobile Service of the army the dismissal of any foreign driver who shall have been guilty of a serious breach of discipline. The Chief of the Automobile Service of the army shall have the right to order immediate dismissal on receipt of a report setting forth the facts. Such dismissal involves the absolute prohibition to enlist in any other foreign sanitary section.

### REGISTRATION AND UPKEEP OF VEHICLES

(A) The cars will be registered and attached to the automobile service of the army with which these sections are connected.

(B) Each section will include a workshop car with two mechanics for maintenance and light repairs. The unit will always be able to call upon the resources of the automobile park of the army for more important repairs.

(C) The request for spare parts will be centralized by the automobile service of the army which will transmit them to the *Magasin Central Automobile* in the form in use for spare parts for French cars. (Never followed as the American Field Service always had its own repair park and supplied its own spare parts.)

(D) Gasoline, supplies, and tires will be furnished to these sections in the same way as to any other section of the automobile service.

### MOVEMENTS OF PERSONNEL

Foreign volunteers will conform to all rules laid down by the Commanding General-in-Chief concerning circulation in the army zone and especially the rules concerning movements of drivers of the foreign sanitary sections (particularly the obligatory visit to the office of the foreign sanitary sections on going to or returning from the front).

### REPLACING OF DRIVERS AND WITHDRAWAL OF CARS

(A) In the event of the American Field Service being unable to maintain the full effective force of a section in drivers or cars, a supplemental force can be furnished by the automobile service of the army in question.

(B) The cars can be withdrawn from the armies by the Organizing Committee at a month's notice addressed to the Direction of the Automobile Service.

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### INSPECTION BY DELEGATES OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

When members of the Committee wish to visit their formations they should make a request to the Commanding General-in-Chief (*Direction des Services Automobiles*).

### LIST OF PERSONNEL

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | French officer of the automobile service.   |
| 2  | Representatives of the American Field Service who will receive the rations applicable to the rank of sub-lieutenant to the exclusion of all other pay. These representatives will have the title of <i>Commandant-Adjoint</i> and <i>Sous-Chef</i> of section and will have the right to officers' billets. |
| 1  | <i>Maréchal des logis</i> (Sergeant)  |
| 1  | <i>Brigadier fourrier</i> (Corporal)  |
| 2  | chauffeurs  |
| 40 | American volunteers at the maximum  |
| 2  | American mechanics  |
| A  | minimum of 22 ambulances  |
| 1  | repair truck  |
| 1  | touring car   |
| 1  | touring car   |
| 1  | small truck   |
- } furnished by Americans  
} furnished by French Army

Signed: DOUMENC  
Director of the Automobile  
Service of the General  
Headquarters

Signed: PIATT ANDREW  
Inspector General of the  
American Ambulance  
Field Service

The signing of this agreement at General Joffre's Headquarters marked the transition to a new development of American aid to France. It initiated direct coöperation with the combatant French armies in the advanced zone. But it did more than that, for it actually incorporated American volunteer units in the French Army under the authority and control of French General Headquarters. It meant the beginning of a new undertaking which was destined to develop rapidly, and to play a considerable rôle long before, and indeed, after, America's formal entry into the war. The date of the signing of this agreement has ever since been considered to mark the commencement of the American Field Service, as a distinct organization with functions, relations, and a personnel of its own.

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So began the American Field Service in France, or the American Ambulance Field Service, as it was at first called, an American volunteer formation functioning as an integral part of the armies of France. The agreement once signed, appeals were immediately sent out to American universities for recruits; committees were organized in these universities and in different American cities to collect funds for the purchase of ambulances and equipment and for their upkeep; and before the end of 1915 we were able to offer to the French Army four complete sections, each composed of twenty ambulances and other appurtenant cars, a contingent sufficient to handle all of the sanitary transport of four French divisions.

### THE PERSONNEL OF A SECTION

As to the personnel, the agreement with the French Army had stipulated that each section should have not more than forty American volunteers, that being the customary number in a French ambulance section, allowing two drivers for a car; but, as in the early months we had no redundant supply of volunteers, and as those whom we had, were eager for, and capable of, hard work, the first sections were sent out with only twenty-five or thirty American members, which meant, in principle, one man for each automobile with a small reserve for special duties or for relief in case of sickness, accident, or furlough. In addition the French Army attached to each section from two to four French soldiers, nominally to serve as orderlies and drivers for the French staff, but practically these soldiers did the work of cooks and general handy-men for the sections. The French officer attached to the section was the intermediary through whom orders from the French Army were transmitted to the section, and by him the numerous reports, accounts, and other papers required in the French Army were prepared and handed over to the French authorities. In the latter work he was assisted by two French non-commissioned officers, likewise detailed to the section.

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Thus, each section had, in addition to its American personnel of about thirty members, a French personnel of from five to seven members. The American Field Service officer, officially known as the *Commandant-Adjoint*, was charged with the enforcement of the orders and the maintenance of discipline within the section. In theory such a division of responsibility and command between two officers of different nationalities might easily have led to conflicts of authority and friction between the two, yet, as a matter of fact, during the long history of the Field Service instances of such disagreements were rare. The French officers assigned to the American sections were carefully selected, not merely for their competence and training, but for their tact and familiarity with American character and customs, and in most of our sections the relations between the French and American officers were characterized not only by mutual confidence and respect, but by intimacy and comradeship. Differences of language and nationality counted not at all in the old Field Service sections. French and American members were comrades, sharing the same life, working for the same cause, taking equal pride in their joint accomplishment. The sections, in fact, were more like large families than military formations, the officers and men, whether French or American, eating together, if not at the same table, at least in the same room, and calling each other not infrequently by familiar names rather than by formal titles.

For the information of the reader and as a matter of record it is perhaps worth while to explain how the expenses of an ambulance section were divided between its members, the Field Service organization, and the French Army. The volunteer members were expected to provide their own uniforms, clothing and personal equipment, and to arrange their own travelling expenses from their homes in America to France, and at the end of their enlistment, from France to their homes. Aside from this, practically everything was provided for them. The Field

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Service furnished board and lodging for the men during their period of training and when in Paris on leave, or when returning to America. It made also an allowance of two francs per day for each man in active service to supplement the regular French Army rations. It provided the ambulances, trucks, trailers, staff cars, spare parts, car and section equipment, tents, tools, etc. It repaired the cars that were damaged in its own repair shops, from which it also replenished the sections with new cars, tools, and parts as occasion required. The French Army furnished to the sections the gasoline, oil, and tires consumed by the cars, and provided regular army rations and lodgings for the men and officers in the field. It also paid to the volunteers the regular pay of French soldiers which, during the early years of the war, averaged about five cents daily per man. It should be added that the French Army was notably generous in its treatment of our sections, giving them preference wherever possible in the assignment of quarters, and detailing to them, not merely excellent officers, but, what was equally appreciated, excellent French cooks.

### FINDING NEW HEADQUARTERS

THE principle of an ambulance service in the French Army being established, a pressing question was the finding and establishment of an appropriate base. The four sections which we were able to send out in 1915 were distributed at intervals along the French front all the way from Flanders to Alsace. Their work had no relation with the work of the American Hospital at Neuilly, which was more than two hundred miles distant from the nearest section, and which received its wounded, not by motor ambulance, but by rail from the army zone. The problems of these sections were those of motor transport as part of the Automobile Service of the French Army, and had nothing to do with surgery and medical work, as will be explained in a subsequent paragraph. The Field Service, with a quite distinct work to perform in a quite different

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region, with its own special funds, its own committees in America, and its own staff in France, needed space and freer opportunity to develop. Inevitably it was bound to follow the example of other American *œuvres de guerre* and become a completely independent entity. The umbilical cord, which at the outset had bound it to the American Hospital, had to be cut if it was to undergo any considerable growth.

For nearly a year we continued to use as our Paris office a small room in an outhouse in the grounds of the American Hospital in Neuilly, with a small attic in the main building as a dormitory for the men *en route* to the front. Early in 1916, however, after months of persistent search, we found, with great good fortune, the spacious and historic property at 21 rue Raynouard in picturesque old Passy, and this estate, thanks to the munificence of the French family who owned it, the Hottinguers, was placed at our disposal gratuitously for the duration of the war. Here were not only plenty of rooms for offices and stores, but adequate dormitory and messing quarters for two or three hundred men, a separate building for an infirmary, and large grounds in which scores of cars could be parked, hundreds of men drilled, and numerous sections organized. This, with two neighboring buildings at 5 rue Lekain, temporarily loaned by the same benefactors during the period of our greatest activity in 1917, became the heart and centre of the Field Service, and continued so to serve during the remaining three years of the war. Thus was another problem of the Field Service solved. A satisfactory base was found, and indeed a veritable home established about which will ever cluster the grateful memories of several thousand members who at one time or another enjoyed its sheltering comfort. The importance of the step is indicated by the fact that although, when the change of base was made in 1916, there were only five sections in the field, a year later the number had increased to forty-seven sections serving with the French armies at the front.

#### NOTE EXPLAINING CHART ON REVERSE OF PAGE

A division of the French Army normally included three infantry regiments and an artillery regiment, each of which had its own sanitary formation of stretcher-bearers and doctors, who gave hasty dressings at the first-aid shelters. In addition the division had its own corps of surgeons, doctors, attendants, and stretcher-bearers (*G.B.D.*, *Groupe des Bran-*  
*cardiers Divisionnaire*), who maintained at least one central dressing-station or *poste de secours*, where reexaminations were made and, when necessary, further treatment given, and who served as a reserve for the regimental *postes*. In addition the divisional corps maintained a mobile hospital unit, which served as a sorting-station (*triage*), assigning cases according to their nature and gravity to particular hospitals in the rear not attached to the division.

Where conditions of the terrain allowed, motor ambulances brought wounded directly from the regimental first-aid shelters, but ordinarily the wounded were brought from these shelters to the *G.B.D. postes* by hand, or upon stretchers slung on a light two-wheeled frame. The ambulances then carried them back to the *triage*, and from there again to the base or evacuation hospitals.

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wars, the assumption being that with long distances between dressing-stations and hospitals, such as were familiar in Mexico and the Philippines, surgical or medical treatment might be advantageously administered *en route*. Such conditions did not exist when motor-cars decimated distance, and above all in France with its complex network of railroads and its closely grouped towns and villages in which hospitals could be established. Surgical and medical training had, therefore, no part to play in the ambulance service in France. The French Army discovered at the very beginning of the war that the only rôle of this service was to get the wounded as rapidly and comfortably as possible from the battle-line to a field hospital, usually only a few miles back, where they could receive proper treatment under advantageous conditions. What was required of an ambulance section was to furnish to the Division, wherever and whenever required motor-ambulances in sufficient number, adequately supplied with gasoline, tires, and spare parts, properly looked after by motor mechanics, and properly handled by experienced drivers. From the French point of view it was as illogical to expect doctors and surgeons to accomplish this work successfully as it would be to ask automobile experts to do surgical and medical work in the dressing-stations and hospitals. The divisional surgeon in the French Army had a certain number of ambulances and drivers, under the command of an automobile officer, placed at his disposal by the Automobile Service. The surgeons decided the daily work to be performed by the section, but they had nothing whatsoever to do either with its internal administration and discipline or with the upkeep of its membership and material.

The French system of entrusting the supply and maintenance of motor material to an especially trained corps, proved not only efficient, but of marked advantage. In fact so manifest were its advantages that when subsequently the American Army came to France, many of its higher officers perceived the superiority of the French

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system and tried to incorporate in the Ambulance Service of the United States Army the principles of organization which had already been tested by three years' actual service in France, both by the French army ambulance sections and by our American volunteer sections as well. Almost a year after the arrival of the American troops in France a Motor Transport Corps was in fact established as a department of the United States Army, and it was based in the main on the French model. The war came to an end, however, before the plans to incorporate the American motor ambulance sections in this corps had been adopted.

### STANDARDIZING EQUIPMENT

BUT to return to the Field Service, one other problem presented itself in the early days, the proper solution of which seems simple enough in retrospect, but which at the moment was not without its perplexities. This was the question of the kind of ambulance to be employed, and its decision furnished a distinct technical contribution to the machinery of the war. During our first months of effort many generous friends in America and in France offered to turn over to us automobiles of diverse makes, and several such cars were actually sent over from America, equipped as ambulances, with every device employed by vehicles of that name in American cities. Various automobile dealers in America also wrote offering to present us without charge new cars of their manufacture, and one firm of considerable standing even promised to donate cars for an entire section. At a time when the Field Service was in an incipient and indigent condition, such offers were decidedly tempting, since they opened the way to a rapid and immediate development. It was not, therefore, without initial hesitation that we decided to reject such offers.

The difficulties, however, attendant upon the utilization of such gifts far outweighed any obvious advantages, as the later experience of other ambulance formations

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abundantly proved. Ambulances made in America were not constructed for war work. They were not designed to carry the largest number of cases in the least possible space, nor arranged to carry the stretchers upon which seriously wounded cases are transported in the army. Such ambulances had to be completely reconstructed in France before they could be of any use on the front. But what was far more serious, it was impossible to procure or keep on hand spare parts of every sort for a great variety of different automobile types. If an ambulance service was to function promptly and without interruption, it must be composed of cars for the repair of which stocks of interchangeable spare parts were always available. Uniformity in the type of cars used was, therefore, a prerequisite of efficiency.

We decided, accordingly, at an early date, not to accept gifts of miscellaneous cars and to limit our service to not more than two types of automobiles. Each section would be given two heavy cars (two- or three-ton trucks), of a uniform make, one to be fitted out as a workshop with simple machinery, hand tools, and a stock of spare parts for the section's ambulances, the other to be equipped as an ambulance with benches for fifteen or twenty sitting cases, to be used in case of heavy evacuations in the rear, and also to serve for the transportation of tents and other heavy section equipment when the section moved from one locality to another. One of these cars was to be used also to trail a specially designed rolling kitchen, with which each section was provided, a kitchen fitted up like a small room on wheels with a stove, bins for coal, wood, and flour, shelves and hooks for pots and kettles, drawers and cupboards for meat, vegetables, canned foods, and smaller articles, all arranged after the manner of a gypsy wagon, so that it could be drawn up by the roadside, or before any cantonment, and a hot meal quickly prepared without other installation or shelter.

As for the ambulances which were to constitute the

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main body of the section, we initiated an experiment which at the outset was considered by many of doubtful expediency, but which proved in the end so eminently successful that it was adopted by other formations, and in particular by a large department of the United States Army when that army came to France. The French and British Armies had employed only heavy motors for their ambulance services, cars equipped to carry from four to six lying cases or eight to ten sitting cases; but there were certain disadvantages in these cars. Under the usual conditions of trench warfare wounded did not arrive at dressing-stations in such numbers, and the result was, either that wounded were held at the *postes* until a sufficient number had arrived to make a load, or that the ambulance had to make its run half empty. On the other hand, in moments of heavy offensive or defensive operations, when wounded were arriving in large numbers, the roads were so encumbered with traffic that a heavy ambulance, being unable to slip in and out of the convoys, had to keep its place in the endless procession of slow-moving trucks, artillery, supply wagons, and marching troops, thus prolonging painfully the suffering of the soldier *en route* to the surgeon and the hospital.

From the point of view of adaptation to the service a light, small car seemed preferable. From the point of view of transport from America, it offered the additional advantage of occupying less space on the cargo ships, when such space was precious and difficult to obtain. Moreover, such cars were less expensive, and this was also a point to be considered when we had not the financial backing of any government, or of any widely organized institution such as the Red Cross. So we adopted the Ford motor for the standard ambulances, and in the years before the United States Government was lending its support to the Allied cause, we imported into France approximately twelve hundred such *chassis*. Here let it be said that in doing so we received no favor or assistance from their manufacturer, who with his peculiar ideas of philan-

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thropy, was averse to giving any assistance to war activities, even to the relief of suffering entailed by war. From him we could obtain not even the favor of wholesale rates in the purchase of cars and parts, and for every Ford car and for every Ford part imported from America, in those difficult days before America came into the war, we were obliged to pay, not the dealer's price, but the full market price charged to ordinary retail buyers.

Each section then was endowed with the following material: twenty small Ford ambulances actually in the field; two such ambulances in reserve; a Ford staff car; a light repair car (Ford) carefully designed to carry an assortment of spare parts and to make emergency repairs on the road; a large repair car (two-ton truck) equipped with workbench, forge, vises, and other tools to make heavy repairs in the cantonment; a two-ton truck arranged to carry from fifteen to twenty sitting cases and used especially for evacuating lightly wounded or gas cases from the hospitals to the trains; a kitchen trailer with stove and cooking-utensils; and three tents capable of furnishing living, dining, and sleeping facilities for the men.

### THE LIGHT F.S. AMBULANCE

THE ambulance bodies we had constructed for us in France. On account of the short-wheel base of the Ford, the bodies projected far beyond the rear wheels, which gave them a characteristic, not to say amusing, appearance. But this very fact had two compensating advantages. First, the cars could be manœuvred in traffic and turned around with surprising ease in a very small space. Second, by reinforcing the rear spring, and lifting it above the axle on specially made high perches so that the rear axle was protected against possible bumps from the loaded body, the overhang resulted in an unusually comfortable suspension of the ambulance, even when running on very rough roads.

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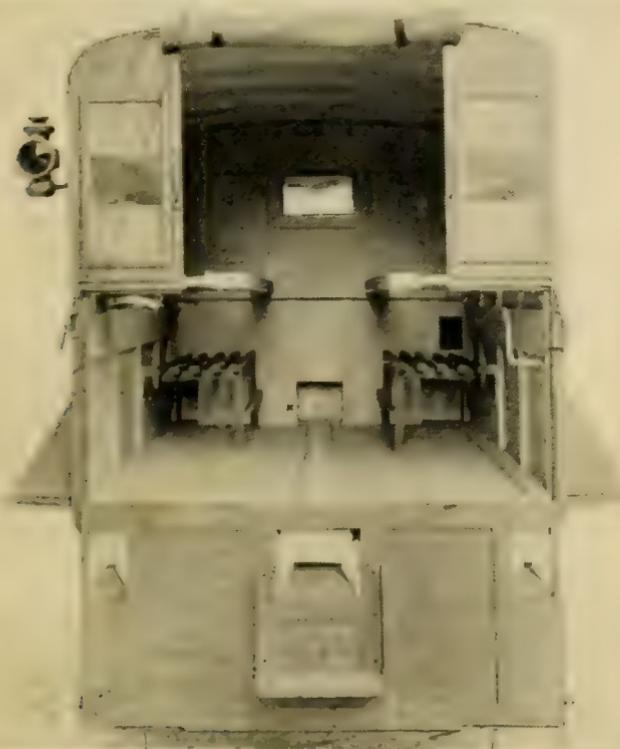
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Gradually, and after much experimentation, a light ambulance body was developed by the Field Service of such dimensions that it could comfortably accommodate three lying or five sitting cases, and at a pinch could carry seven or even eight sitting cases. The design provided for the utmost economy of space, and although the cubical content was perhaps not more than half that of the body of an ordinary ambulance of the kind constructed to carry four stretchers, our cars could carry three. Letting down the rear gate, two stretchers could be slid in on the floor of the car, and the third on ingeniously contrived tracks above. When not in use these tracks folded up and rested flat against the sides of the ambulance, while two seats, which were also folded against the walls of the car, could be instantly dropped into position, and the car transformed in a moment into an ambulance for four sitting cases. In addition to these, room was provided, by specially constructed seats placed outside near the driver, for three more sitters, making it possible in clement weather to carry three lying and three sitting cases on each trip. In emergencies as many as eight wounded men have been carried at one time, the running-boards and mud-guards serving as extra seats and racks for the soldiers' equipment. An ambulance loaded like this was an interesting sight. The driver seemed almost buried under his freight; he had not an inch of room more than was necessary for the control of his car. Covered with mud, blood-stained, with startlingly white bandages against their tanned skin, with puttees loose and torn, their heavy boots and shapeless uniforms gray from exposure, and with patient, suffering faces still bearing the shock of bombardment, these heaps of wounded rolled slowly from the *postes de secours* to shelter and care.

In the earliest of our ambulance bodies the walls and top were made of painted canvas which had the obvious advantage of being light; but canvas walls could not be easily cleansed and disinfected, nor could they



Side view showing sheet-iron apron and canvas storm-curtains to protect driver, top-rack for spare tires, side-box for tools and gasoline reserves, also front panel which swings open, allowing driver to arrange pillows for, or give water to, wounded on stretchers.



Rear view showing folding third-stretcher tracks, folding seats, rack on wall for folded stretcher, holes in front wall and canvas pockets in rear door for extra long stretcher-handles, folding step to aid in entering.

#### THE LIGHT FIELD SERVICE AMBULANCE



## INTRODUCTION

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be made to exclude wind and dust and winter's cold. So after a few unsuccessful experiments with an extra canvas lining, we abandoned the lighter covering altogether and substituted matched boarding of tough mahogany for the sides and top, and this we continued to use until the end of the war.

During three years the Field Service ambulance was undergoing incessant adaptation and improvement of detail. In it were gradually incorporated many contrivances, suggested by experience, for the comfort of the wounded, for the protection of the driver against bad weather, and for the orderly storage of stretchers, tools, and reserves of oil, gasoline, tubes, and tires. Some of these can be seen on the accompanying illustrations, but it would take a long chapter by itself to call attention to all of them, with their evolution and the reasons therefor.<sup>1</sup> It suffices to say that the Field Service model, which was the product of so much experiment and thought, was subsequently adopted by several French ambulance formations as well as by the Russians, Roumanians, and Serbians, and

<sup>1</sup> We may cite one or two detailed instances to illustrate the way in which the Field Service model was perfected. For example we had designed our ambulance interiors to fit the official standard French stretchers, and, both in order to economize space and to prevent the stretchers from slipping, the dimensions were trimmed to a close fit. Great was our subsequent dismay to find stretchers at different points on the front varying in length and some with handles even a foot longer than the standard. To meet this difficulty which would sometimes have necessitated the painful transfer of a wounded soldier from one stretcher to another, we had openings cut in the front wall of the ambulance under the driver's seat and folding oil-cloth pockets inserted in the rear door and curtains into which obstreperous stretcher-handles might protrude. Thus the problem was solved without enlarging the body or increasing the weight of the car, and all our later cars were made with these devices.

Again, although the standard stretchers had wooden legs, one frequently met stretchers with iron legs which tore the floors of the cars as the stretchers were pushed in. To remedy this and prevent the roughening of the tracks, the particular boards in the floor and on the upper racks over which the stretcher legs slid, were replaced by strips of hard oak, which were left unpainted and were greased to facilitate the sliding of the stretchers in and out. This detail was also incorporated in all subsequently built cars. Small as it may seem, the absence of this provision in many United States Army cars sent to France caused much inconvenience.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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eventually by the United States Army Ambulance Service, but not by the latter until several thousand Ford ambulances of an inconvenient and less practical model had been sent to France. We sent over a finished model to the United States in 1917 which was exhibited in many cities, and as a result, light ambulances built upon the Field Service plan are now also widely used in this country for civilian work.

The success of the Field Service ambulances answered every apprehension and exceeded every anticipation. They could travel over roads impossible to other motor vehicles. They could climb the narrow zigzag mountain paths of Alsace, where up to that time the wounded had only been carried on muleback or in horse-drawn carts. They could skim over and pull through the muddy plains of Flanders. They could work their way in and out among passing convoys, and if they were on a blocked road they could pull their way through the adjacent fields. If on a dark night one of our ambulances ran into a ditch, or dropped into a shell-hole, it only required the help of three or four passing soldiers to lift out the car and set it again on the road. The advantages of these ambulances were particularly evident during the great battle of Verdun in 1916, where they attracted favorable comment from many observers. Among such comments may be cited the following excerpt from the London *Daily Telegraph*:

For fully three months, until railways could be built, France kept up this endless chain of four thousand autos, two thousand moving up one side of the roadway from Bar-le-Duc as the other two thousand moved on the opposite side from Verdun. The four thousand automobiles included also the ambulance autos which brought back the wounded. Many of these were urgent cases, and yet these ambulances could only move at the established rate of one yard per second. Hundreds of lives would have been lost had it not been for the sections of the American Field Service stationed at Verdun. Equipped with small, light, speedy cars, capable of going almost anywhere and everywhere that the heavy French auto-ambulances could not go, the "rush" surgical cases were given to these American drivers. They were not given a place in the endless chain,

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but were allowed to dart into the intervening space of sixty feet maintained between the cars, and then make their way forward as best they could. When an open field offered, they left the road entirely, and, driving across, would come back into line when they could go no farther and await another chance for getting ahead. They were able to bring the wounded down from Verdun often twice as fast as those who came in the regular ambulances, and always without ever committing the one great error upon which the life of France depended, the tying up for a single instant of the endless chain of the four thousand automobiles of Verdun.

It was immediately after this demonstration of the superiority of our light Field Service ambulances in the Verdun battle, that the Commander-in-Chief of the French Army requested two Field Service sections to be sent to the Balkans to serve with French troops on the Serbian and Albanian front in regions where roads were sometimes little more than river-beds.

In such manner, then, were solved the three principal problems of the formative days in France. The French Army had adopted the Field Service as a part of itself. The Service had become a full-fledged entity with an establishment of its own. Its tables of organization had been determined and its type of equipment adopted and tested. The lines had been staked out along which its future might develop. That future, however, depended primarily upon the response from America.

A. PIATT ANDREW



### III

## THE EFFORT IN AMERICA

The root of the plant is not unsightly to science, though for chaplet and festoon we cut the stem short.

EMERSON

### THE SPIRIT AND THE PURPOSE

As the fruition of this four years' effort has proven of very practical value, and as its increase has been strong enough to have withstood many temperatures, the process of its growth may interest any one of that good legion in this country which has toiled so steadfastly in the wide fields of war activity. Out of the great number of Americans whose partisanship belonged inevitably to France after those incredible days of September, 1914, there were many, from East to West, who labored earnestly and with such science as only determination teaches, for the building of this Service in France. Even in the first days, when the effort was still too near earth to give promise of any such fine branch as it later bore, the mere appeal of sending our own men and our own cars to work actually at the front as a living evidence of sympathy — and the possibility that we might so help even a little in conserving life in the French Army — sufficed to generate the energy which finally carried us over the long road to completion. Friendship spent to its best purpose is reflected clearly enough in the story of our labor in France, but here, too, far in the background, from first to last, were thousands of busy hands creating the opportunity of which that record is the fulfilment. Many volumes would not hold the list of generous deeds in the construction, nor all the sum of fine desire to which this Service proved expression. Those of us who saw the first giving, found in it the revelation of something greater than any material contribution, and it is doubtful if even the



HENRY D. SLEEPER



## INTRODUCTION

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knowledge now of all the good achievement can outweigh for us the value in the experience. Those who so gave need no better recompense than that which they must find in memory, and our only tribute can be the full acknowledgment that without their spirit a great purpose would have been lost.

Early in 1915, when the prospect of a long war had become obvious, and when no gleam of any such help from this country as it ultimately gave had lighted the horizon, there came forward, it is good to remember, that creditable host of every age and rank whom neither the barriers of politics nor distance could hold back from service. Restless to offer practical expression of their understanding, and of their respect for justice and great courage, they each gave, according to such means as was possible — in money generously and constantly, or, where knowledge and education could serve, they spoke and wrote the truth; but most of all, perhaps, those who were fortunate enough to be able to give themselves, by going, helped to light our country on its way, not so much by example as by the vision many of them were able to send so clearly back to their own people.

Among the first of these were a few young Americans whom chance had found in Europe at the hour of invasion. Quick to take advantage of their fortune, they offered every sort of service, and soon most of them were detailed to drive such ambulances as could be put together with the material available at the moment. During the weeks that followed they labored day and night to probably as useful and stimulating a purpose as they had ever known. Presently their letters written home began to find their way into local newspapers, and by their direct and intimate statement of conditions, did much not only to arouse sympathy, but to formulate sound judgments in communities which had previously shown only passive interest. Later, when the time came for us to make a general campaign for men and cars, every town where such early publicity had been given, proved

doubly ready to coöperate. Doubtless the writers of these first letters felt their exploitation to be out of accord with modesty — or even a breach of confidence — but they may afford to condone a fault which had so profitable a result. In response to their story came letters to our headquarters from various parts of the country, in most instances from students at college, expressing interest not only in joining the effort, but in increasing it by organizing committees for recruiting and for raising ambulances.

For those of us to whom a generous destiny had given the building of the Service, this meant two vital things: first, that by the very spontaneity and force of such means, properly utilized, a wide response would surely be forthcoming and a large work of conservation founded; second, and equally stimulating as a possibility, that by thus enlisting the coöperation of young men from universities throughout the country, a way would be opened of establishing what might develop into a potent and active influence for the Allied Cause, not through the ordinary channel of printed or spoken propaganda, but by virtue of the daily contact which these men would have with the French Army in action, where there could be no foundation for any conviction but truth. We realized in those first days, as now, after four years of constant and intimate relation, does every member of this Service, that we could wish our friends in France no surer talisman of support than that all the world should know the truth of them.

### MEANS OF FULFILMENT

WORTH while as such an intention undoubtedly was, the gulf between desire and fulfilment soon became obvious. As the ambition, beyond maintaining the service then existent, was to so increase it as to be able to meet any possible need which the French Army might express, a large monthly outlay was inevitable, beside the raising of a sum sufficient for the purchase of cars, and all other equipment. We had a good cause, an unusually sympa-

thetic means of operation, but at that time no affiliation in this country on which we had a right to depend for any large or responsible effort. A way of winning friendship, a competent organization, and a considerable fund had therefore all to be achieved — and quickly. The first step, of course, was to interest a few individuals to such an extent as might warrant making a general appeal. Although our two first books, *Friends of France*, and *Ambulance No. 10*, which were soon to prove of indispensable help, were not published until some months later, we already had enough letters and records of the days' work to guarantee its value and justify monetary help. Foremost and most zealous in the inception of the fund was Mr. Edward J. de Coppet, of New York. A man of distinguished personality and character, he possessed a rarely generous sense of responsibility toward those with whom a broad and successful life had brought him in contact. Whatever his objective, whether in furtherance of individual talent, of educational or philanthropic purpose, or some civic interest, his coöperation was both active and complete. Most widely known, perhaps, as founder of the Flonzaley Quartette, and a patron of the best in the musical life of New York, he was no less a factor in its business world, as senior partner of de Coppet & Doremus. A generous guide and cheering philosopher to a large and varied circle of friends, he turned his influence and power fully toward our Service. From the moment of our first interview, it was apparent that rather than having to interest him in our behalf, we should have to strive well to maintain the level of his ambition for us. After a kindly but very thorough consideration of the practicability of the proposed effort, he endorsed it by giving a number of ambulances, a thousand dollars monthly toward maintenance, and in addition by setting aside a sum to meet the immediate needs of organization. In a letter of July, 1915, expressing his hope for our future, he explained that in establishing this special fund, he trusted we might find it not merely an

incentive to maintain the sections then in the field, but by publishing records of their days' work, and by speaking in various parts of the country, that so wide an interest might be aroused as to make possible sending to France many hundred cars, and a greater number of students from American universities. How accurate his foresight proved he was not destined to know, for he died within the year; but that his hope was so much more than fulfilled was in no small measure due to the spirit of his giving. Many an obstacle was later overcome and many a trial won in memory of our high obligation to him. All that he had intended was made financially possible by the generosity of his son, Mr. André de Coppet, and by the prompt and constant coöperation thereafter of Mr. James J. Storrow, of Boston, who had duplicated Mr. de Coppet's subscription, and had given us his own office at Lee, Higginson & Co., for our American headquarters.

Notwithstanding the sound encouragement which two such benefactions meant, we could not properly have succeeded in our larger intention without the approval of several of the earliest and most interested friends of the Service. Mr. Robert Bacon, as President of the American Ambulance Hospital at Neuilly, under the auspices of which we had hitherto operated, was one of the first sponsors of the Field Service, and logically most deeply interested in its successful increase. He not only expressed confidence in our undertaking, but gave us the benefit of his offices and staff in New York, became Treasurer of the Fund, and by wise counsel and frequent coöperation during the next years, did much in the making of our history. Upon Mrs. Bacon, as Chairman of the American Committee of the Hospital, there devolved at this time practically the whole burden of raising the larger part of a million dollars annually to maintain that great institution. In spite of the magnitude of this task, she found time to do many a generous deed in our behalf, and by her advocacy of our cause, established our iden-



ROBERT BACON  
Died May 29, 1919



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tity through her committees in various parts of the country, where we might have had no other affiliations. To two other friends the Service owes perhaps as fine an obligation as to any one. From the hour of our beginning until the demobilization four years later, Mr. and Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt, by quick endorsement of our whole purpose, and loyal support through every trial, were an unfailing stimulus to our energy. In reminiscence of our early history in America, there comes ever a procession of grateful memories of those who helped when we were surer of our desire than of our capacity. Whether the need was for recruits, or cars, or effort in some untried field, to each of them belongs some word or deed indispensable unto the day. So large a part of our structure were they that even to speak briefly of what they did would claim too great a share in a story which justly belongs to youth and its valiant fulfilment of the trust they gave into its keeping.

### RECRUITING THE VOLUNTEERS

IN establishing the new ambulance sections, it was essential, if the volunteer spirit were to be kept alive, not only that no salaries be given, but that in every possible instance an applicant should pay his own expenses. With the French Army the fact that these Americans whom they saw in so many places, sharing the risks and labor of their days, did so wholly by choice, and moreover often spent their small savings for the privilege, established the sort of friendship which no minor misunderstandings could efface. Every member of the Service endorsed and respected this regulation, but it occasionally proved a barrier to the enlistment of men whose character and experience exactly fitted them for the work. Particularly was this so during 1916 and 1917, when the need for recruits was much greater. A small subsidiary fund was therefore established for such cases, and in our subsequent history appear many proofs that the benefit of money well spent may be far out of proportion to its

quantity. As the experience of four years shows that practically half the wounded carried were saved by the promptness with which our cars were generally able to get them to *postes de secours*, and as an ambulance often carried ten men a day, a driver who had been given the three or four hundred dollars necessary to put him through his six months' enlistment could afford some sense of satisfaction in having brought back so worth-while a return on the investment of his benefactor.

Committees were soon formed to arouse interest in the Service both as regards finances and recruiting, in more than a hundred towns and cities throughout the United States. A few of these in the Middle and Far West had permanent recruiting officers, but the majority were temporary, to make necessary arrangements for the illustrated lectures. These committees were in nearly every case financially independent, raising their own funds to recruit drivers or to donate ambulances, but sending, through a local treasurer, upon fulfilment of their effort, the net sum of contributions to the American Headquarters of the Service. The only exception to this system was the Chicago office, which was wholly independent, from first to last, of our American Headquarters, financially and otherwise. Owing to the liberal contribution of drivers and cars which that city and neighboring places and universities had offered, it seemed best to establish a permanent committee to control directly all the business and personal questions in that part of the country. To Mr. Chauncey McCormick, and later to Mr. Charles B. Pike, who succeeded him as Mid-Western Representative, as well as to Mr. Charles L. Hutchinson, the Treasurer, and Mr. Samuel Insull, Chairman of the Chicago Committee, the Service owes one of the most vital and useful factors in its construction. Recruiting committees were later organized in thirty-three of the larger colleges and universities, consisting generally of the President, members of the faculty, and representatives of the leading elements in the student body. As these committees,

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owing to the limited number of men we were able to provide for, could choose only about forty per cent of the applicants, the character of the personnel was of the first order.

In the journeys of our speakers through various parts of America with the moving pictures which the French Army had taken of our men on duty, the interest in and knowledge of events in Europe varied much less than might have been expected. Wherever there was little enthusiasm it seemed generally to have been the result of even less first-hand information. Although publicity and businesslike preparation for showing the pictures naturally increased the size of our audiences, the proportionate returns seem to have depended more on the sympathy and revelation of the pictures themselves than on the size or type of audiences.

In the lecturer's daily report of a trip which included nearly thirty of the larger cities and towns through the Middle West and West, there appear two rather interesting pages illustrative of this fact, written from different sections of the country, and describing the result of showing the pictures before two audiences of wholly different character. He writes the following from Cleveland:

I find that the utmost forethought and energy has been spent here in regard to our pictures. The films were shown in the ballroom of the Hotel Statler. Such prominence had been given to the event through a continued campaign of publicity that practically all of Cleveland society came together for it. Early in the evening many dinners were given and every private dining-room in the hotel was occupied. After the preliminary talk and pictures, a ball took place. As entrance was by invitation, with a charge of ten dollars, quite a sum had been thereby raised. The interest shown in the first two reels was so keen that an earnest appeal was then made for ambulances. Twelve were promptly contributed in this interval, and four more later. Before the evening was over, numerous others had been added, so that more than fifty thousand dollars resulted. Within two days, this amount had risen to eighty-seven thousand.

A week later there appears this entry, at Butte, Montana:

This is essentially a mining town, and with foreigners of every description — some of them whose mother countries were of the Allies, but many whose antecedents were not so. We arrived just before registration day, and as the authorities expected trouble, saloons were closed, the militia in readiness, and the crowds freely displaying the red flag. Our meeting was held in a large theatre, and the place was jammed. I and several of the committeemen, on the stage, were at first hissed. Most of this disapproval seemed to come from the balconies. The authorities had taken every precaution to avoid trouble, and there were plain-clothes men stationed behind the scenery on the stage to protect us. Antagonistic, or at best indifferent, as the audience had proved itself, as the performance went on they became quiet. After the pictures were shown, there was a strong appeal made. The result was surprising. When the committee in charge counted the proceeds, it was found that seven hundred dollars more had been given by the miners in the balconies than by the representative citizens in the orchestra, generous though the latter had been. That this liberal response was forthcoming as the result of merely relating our story, and in spite of preconceived prejudice, seems proof that any war apathy that may exist in such towns as this in the West is largely the result of lack of sympathetic information.

The final comment of this speaker is accurate enough as far as it goes, but unfortunately we had evidence of something more than lack of information. Misinformation and malice, both covert and obvious, were daily acquaintances, sometimes from clubs or organizations, and often from individuals — all of Teuton sympathy. During the first two years, when free expression of anti-Ally opinion involved no penalty of ostracism, as it later did, we met at least some spark of enmity in almost every community, and not infrequently encountered the real flame. While we could not hope then to do much toward stamping this out, we knew that by going through it and succeeding in our particular determination, we should become part of the integral triumph. Once or twice, owing to this enmity, the appointed place of showing our pictures had to be changed, or an engagement postponed, and even the legality of our sending men over to serve

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with the French Army was challenged; but such opposition, it is almost needless to say, kindled only a more determined zeal among those who had our interests in hand, and the outcome was accordingly always in our favor.

The press notice and publicity resulting from these pictures lent a keen impetus to recruiting. Harvard, Cornell, California, and many other colleges, and cities throughout the country, contributed large numbers of men and cars. The first section of men to go across as a unit was sent by Leland Stanford University, and sailed directly after the German declaration of unrestricted warfare, two months before this country entered the war. Stanford later recruited two more sections, and within a few weeks Princeton and Dartmouth each sent four complete units. Harvard, which sent over two units at this time, contributed from first to last nearly three hundred and fifty men to the Field Service. The city of St. Louis gave the first section of ambulances and drivers equipped, and wherever necessary, financed, Cleveland, Chicago, Buffalo, and many other cities showing similar activity during the spring of 1917. General and civic interest in the departure of these volunteers was evident in many ways and places, and even before our actual entry into the war they met with many tributes of approval and enthusiasm, such as the public presentation of section flags, and various other farewell ceremonies in their own cities and in New York.

One of the finest sections (*camion*) in the service, both as to character and record, was the youngest as to personnel. Phillips Academy, Andover, shortly before the American declaration of war, organized a unit, of their own volition, without our solicitation, and despite the natural reluctance of their families to have them go before the day of necessity. The admirable standard of Andover's whole war service was due, at least in part, to the character and attitude of the Principal, Dr. Stearns. Certainly in our relations with the representatives of a hundred or more colleges or universities in America, we

met no finer individual force than his. Among the many volunteers who crossed on the steamer with this unit, there were some who expressed skepticism as to such "boys" being able to "see it through." In a friendly sparring contest in settlement of this point a few days later, however, two of them, Frank Talmage and Schuyler Lee, proved ready victors. Almost within the year of their arrival in France, Lee and three of those who went with him — Bruce, Taylor, and Dresser — had died in battle. Willingly enough they gave their youth, and their right to the light of life and friendship. We who knew them, and all that they were, realize the fulness of that offering. They never looked back but to quicken those who followed, and so perhaps led more surely than they knew. Out of their dreams they have left us great realities — and many tasks to make worthy these days that are still ours.

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The accumulating pressure immediately following this success made necessary much greater staffs in all our offices. At this time there were many hundred men weekly to be dealt with, from each of whom we had to get six letters of recommendation, a birth certificate, a guaranty of non-German parentage, a written consent of parents or guardian when the applicant was under age, a certificate of inoculation, a driver's license, etc., in addition to much preliminary correspondence. During the later spring it proved necessary to place representatives in the War Department, to adjust military technicalities; in the Bureau of Citizenship in Washington, to attend to the matter of passports; in the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*, New York, to arrange details of sailing; in the Consulate, and various other offices. Moreover, during the days of transition which followed, communication had to be established between all our men of draft age at the front and their respective draft boards in all parts of the country — entailing a vast amount of complicated correspondence.



GEORGE W. GOODWIN  
2d Lt., U.S. Av.



ALEXANDER B. BRUCE  
1st Lt., U.S. Av.



WILLIAM B. HAGAN  
Cadet, R.A.F.



JACK M. WRIGHT  
1st Lt., U.S. Av.



ALDEN DAVISON  
Cadet, U.S. Av.



SCHUYLER LEE  
Corp., French Av.



WILLIAM H. TAYLOR, JR.  
1st Lt., U.S. Av.



GEORGE E. DRESSER  
Sgt., U.S. Tank Corps

ANDOVER MEMBERS OF THE FIELD SERVICE

Who died in the fulfilment of their duty



## INTRODUCTION

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In Boston, by courtesy of Lee, Higginson & Co., our large staff was amply cared for as to working quarters, for in this emergency, as well as all others from beginning to end, the late Major Henry L. Higginson gave us his support and personal interest. In all the risks and swift decisions of those days, the Service had no more constant watcher and ally than he. Always when we needed sound, courageous judgment to justify or to confute a seeming obligation, he stood ready both with advice and with responsibility. Appreciating his many other exacting interests, we might perhaps have spared him our problems, but all of us who knew him felt that one of the finest factors of his citizenship was that he cared more to share the burdens than the triumphs of his friends. It would have been unwise, and impossible, to have been near him and not to have turned to him for advice in the creation of any great work.

In New York, as the port of embarkation, a multitude of recruits had to be helped through the exigencies of departure, and an immense number of problems had daily to be disposed of. In facing this almost limitless increase of detail, we had looked often, if with inarticulate longing, at some fine offices close to our own, and belonging to the estate of the late Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan. Large and perfectly equipped as were the offices which Mr. Bacon allowed us to share, all the American interests of the Neuilly Hospital had to be cared for there, so that the omnivorous demands of our growth seemed an imposition. Mr. Bacon had already gone to France on General Pershing's staff; so after one most busy and congested morning, we were spurred into calling upon Mr. J. P. Morgan, and to confiding in him our difficulties. Within the hour he had arranged that we should take immediate possession, gratis, of the coveted quarters. As this gave us five large rooms directly across the hall from where we were, we had only to reinstate ourselves and were thereby spared the inconvenience and confusion which a change of address would have involved at

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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such a crucial time. Of the many recollections of our four years, these days were perhaps at once our most stimulating and our most discouraging; at one hour full of new opportunity too fine not to be met, and the next moment facing some *impasse* of red tape or changing regulations. The race to meet the unprecedented demands upon our energy and resources, before the inevitable arrival of centralized and governmental control of all such work as ours, was only won by the younger members of our staff, who labored voluntarily during long days, and then met in almost nightly council in order to deal better with their problems of the morning. Many a thrust they parried, and many a means they found, where those who were older and more fearful of result might have paused, and so missed the good achievement. Should there be here and there some one who remembers an inconvenience to himself, or some inaccurate direction in passing through these offices, let him wonder now if in those days he spent his energy to any better purpose than did they.

Upon the entry of the United States into the conflict, there swiftly followed for us complexities great and small. Foremost, perhaps, was the question of whether our volunteers then in France might continue so to serve, and whether, at least for the present, we might continue to accept more recruits. In view of the exigencies of mobilization and conscription, it seemed best to consult at once with the Secretary of War. Although Mr. Baker had shown himself in various ways appreciative of the Field Service, he naturally had not felt at liberty to give any public expression in this regard until April 7, when he wrote as follows:

Confirming our conversation of this morning, I beg leave to say to you, as the Representative of the American Ambulance Field Service, that the War Department looks with appreciation and approval upon the splendid service being rendered by American citizens in France in association with the French Army. These young men are serving their own country in the

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highest way by their courageous contribution to the efficiency of the armies of those associated in interest with us in this war. I, perhaps, have no right to urge that they remain in France now that the United States has entered upon active military preparation in the conflict, but, at least for the present, a substantial number of these young men will not be needed here, and the training they are securing, while a mere incident to the service they are rendering, will qualify them to be of especial value in the American Army at a later time.

(Signed) NEWTON D. BAKER  
Secretary of War

To a similar telegram sent soon after by the Secretary of War to our California and Stanford Units, he adds, "I congratulate you that you are about to join a chosen company of Americans who have rendered distinguished service."

Thanks to these official tributes of approval, we were able to continue our effort; but there quickly followed the problem of the release of our men from universities without the loss of their degrees. Within the week, however, Cornell University had passed the following resolutions:

RESOLVED, that the University Faculty advises that the several faculties recommend for graduation all members of the senior class in good standing, who would normally graduate in June and who are enrolled or may enroll, in the land or naval forces of the state or nation, and whose services require their absence from the University.

RESOLVED, further, that the above provisions apply to those students who may become members of the American Ambulance Field Service in France.

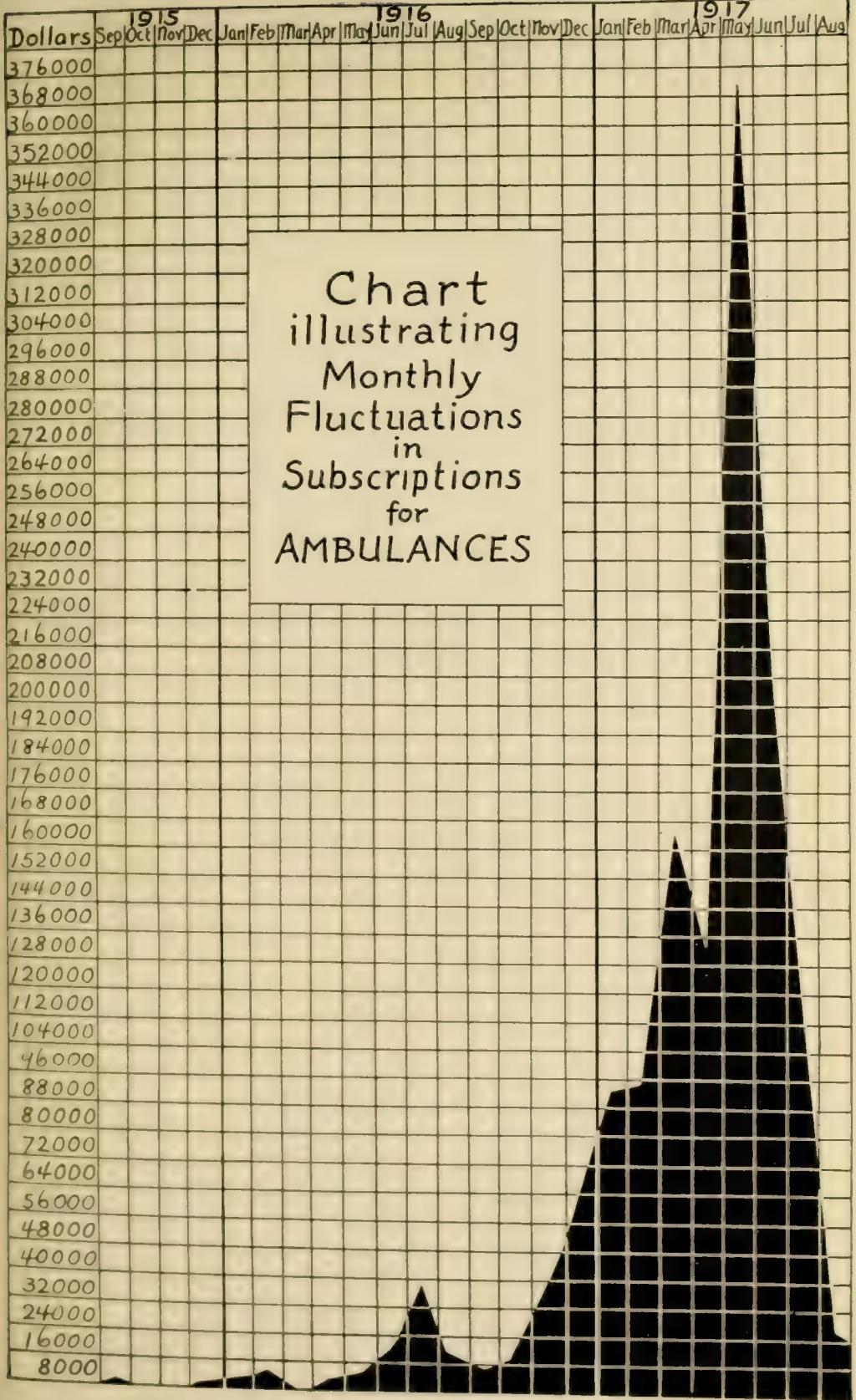
Immediately thereafter, Harvard, Princeton, Dartmouth, Leland Stanford, and practically all the universities and colleges throughout the country passed similar resolutions granting to the members of the Field Service the same academic privileges as were given to those entering the United States Army or Navy.

During 1915 and 1916 the growth of the Service, though constant, was very gradual, but during April, May, and June of 1917 it exceeded any figures which

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could have been logically foreseen, especially as we had made less effort at this period than previously. This perhaps resulted from the fact that very many of those who had seen our pictures, without responding at the time, felt it the most sympathetic way of giving after this country had actually entered the war. Until this time we had experienced no insuperable difficulties in shipping all necessary material to France, or in building ambulances as quickly as they were given. Realizing that a greatly increased output of cars would be necessary to meet the increase in enlistments, we had purchased several hundred extra *chassis*, a great quantity of extra parts, and had engaged to send to France a number of mechanics to meet the emergency. We had made arrangements in regard to shipment with the automobile companies, the Clearing House, and steamship lines, and a quantity of *chassis* were on the piers in New York awaiting embarkation. Just at this period, however, the French Government, to fill an exigent need for aeroplane construction, assumed practically the entire use of the staff and shops of Kellner, at Billancourt, to which was attached our assembling and repair park, and where were built our ambulance bodies for the *chassis* we shipped from America. At the same time there occurred an unusual shortage of available shipping space from this country on trans-Atlantic liners, owing to exports of a nature vital to the Allies, and which had to take precedence over our equipment, so that we had no alternative but to submit to the delay at this time. To our further trial, we had just lost a large consignment of *chassis* and parts by the torpedoing of the S.S. *Orduna*, moreover, the Red Cross, in the fulfilment of its titanic task, was obliged to assume complete use of the Clearing House. As soon as it became apparent that we could not for the time being promise to put large numbers of new cars into the field, we refused to accept further such donations, and offered to individuals and organizations that had given cars at this time the prompt return of their contributions, if they felt unwilling to sub-





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mit to the inevitable delay. Too warm a tribute cannot be paid to those who had so contributed, and who then gave proof of very generous understanding and confidence, for of the several hundred cars received just previously we were asked for the return of only four. Within the next few months every car given had gone into the field and subsequently served its purpose well with the United States Army Ambulance Corps.

Perhaps the most exigent problem, however, resulting from the unexpected difficulties of shipment and construction, was that several hundred drivers who had just sailed could not be advised of the changed circumstances until their arrival in France; also, we had just accepted as drivers many men who had left their former addresses too late to receive the notification before arriving in New York to sail, and there naturally resulted many personal equations to be solved. But the men showed a most generous spirit of readiness to adapt themselves to delays and disappointments during these weeks, and putting aside their individual preferences, did the most helpful part.

### THE CAMION SERVICE AND MILITARIZATION

JUST prior to this, during a period of unusual activity in the region of Soissons, we had received, through Commandant Doumenc, Director, at the French Ministry of War, of the Automobile Service, an urgent appeal to the effect that if it should prove possible for us to supply them with personnel for transport sections for the carrying of ammunition and supplies, we could so render the utmost service. We were advised that they had a sufficient number of trucks, but were at this time ten thousand drivers short where it was proposed we should coöperate. In view of the exigency of this need, and the temporary difficulties in the output of ambulances, we could not have done otherwise than accept this obligation. As soon as feasible, therefore, this new branch of the Service was inaugurated, and an appeal made to men who had re-

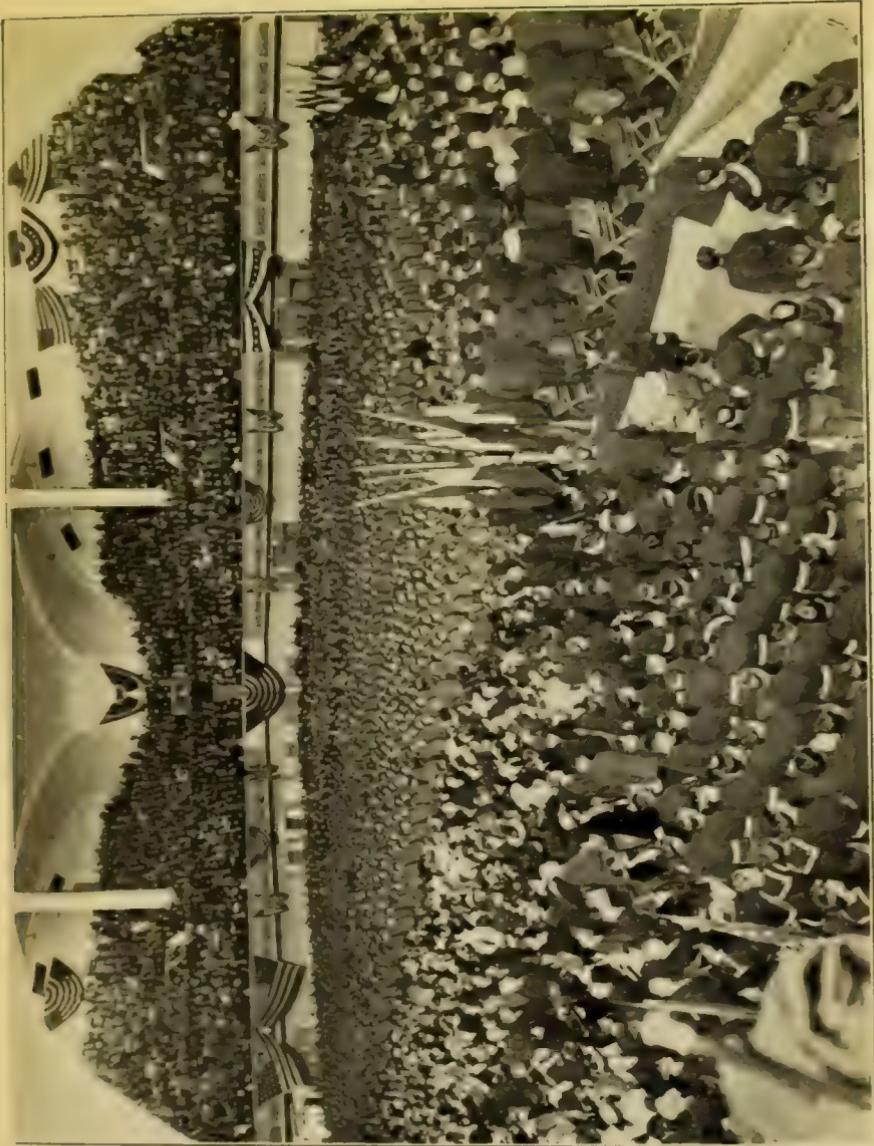
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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cently arrived to help in the accomplishment of this purpose. Some of them, who had sailed just before this development, of course felt morally bound, on arriving, to serve only in accordance with the understanding of their friends in America who had made it possible for them to come over. Through the courtesy of the French Army, which soon after loaned us some ambulances pending the assembling and equipment of the last contingent of our own cars, the desire of a majority of the men who were willing to wait was accomplished after a few weeks' delay.

A large number of drivers, however, were free to choose, and though perhaps preferring ambulance, accepted the *Camion* Service. Whatever the value of our work in France has been, these men should have the satisfaction of remembering the double share of credit which is theirs. To their spirit was no doubt largely due the fact that, hard and unromantic as this work was, the eight hundred Field Service men who entered the *Réserve Mallet* later fulfilled so effectively, as their record proves, a highly important purpose.

The taking over of the Service by the United States Army was not only to be desired, but for several reasons was inevitable. Our declaration of war and the subsequent preparations for sending over our expeditionary force, which involved strict draft regulations, had placed members of a volunteer organization at the front in a technically ambiguous position. While the record and standing of our ambulance drivers with the French Army was of the highest order, as the honors and citations conferred upon them testify, it was obvious that the work that they had undertaken voluntarily had since become an obligation. The changed circumstances made many hundred of our men feel that having fulfilled the original spirit of their intention, they were now free to enlist as they chose. During the subsequent months a large number entered artillery, aviation, or other branches of the army. About sixty per cent, however, remained as mem-



CEREMONY OF FAREWELL RENDERED THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND LEELAND STANFORD  
UNITS BY THE FRIENDS OF FRANCE SOCIETY, IN SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL 24, 1917



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bers of the ambulance and transport. More than a hundred of our men, with fine records and long experience, who were anxious to enlist for the duration of the war, were rejected on account of slight physical defect. Be it said to their credit, the majority of them subsequently entered the French Artillery School at Fontainebleau, and graduating in due course, became officers in the French Army.

The most potent factor, however, necessitating our enrolment in the United States National Army, was that when the first French commission arrived in Washington in May, 1917, General Joffre was asked by Surgeon-General Gorgas what immediate service the United States Army Medical Department could do for France. His reply was a request that the United States should undertake, as far as possible, the responsibility of caring for the wounded of the French armies at the front. A more satisfying tribute could scarcely have been paid the Field Service than this request that the work it had carried on in France for more than two years should be supplemented and entirely assumed by Americans. As a consequence, General Gorgas authorized, through the Secretary of War, the organization of the United States Army Ambulance Service at Allentown.

During the period of our transition from volunteer to regular service, our staffs offered the Army as complete coöperation as they were able, recruiting for it through our University committees, and all our offices, as long as it proved possible. If we could not, perhaps, wholly repress a sense of regret in having to yield all rights of administration, and the satisfaction which an intimate knowledge of each day's achievement in such work as this meant, it was compensation to remember that the Americans whose initiative and energy during the first three years had made so fine a record in France, and we whose opportunity it was to stand behind them, were able to turn over to our own Army at one of the greatest moments of need in its history, so useful an organization.

## THE DEBT TO AMERICAN YOUTH

No true ledger of our account can exist without recording the one obligation underlying and supporting all the traffic of our days. Every one who helped in this country to make the Service will surely most care to acknowledge the debt we owe to American youth. In relation to our work, certainly, its influence was paramount, and upon its desire to be part of a great purpose we were able to build a very useful structure. Changing needs and complications made many a day's labor seem on moving sands, but through the unflagging energy and resource of those who served us by speaking and recruiting throughout this country, and by doing their part in France, the work was at last well accomplished. To them is truly due the fulfilment — and they brought back high interest on all that we were able to contribute. Had they done anything else, or anything less than they did, the rest of the effort would have proved of little consequence. Those of us whose chance it has been to have had a part in the administration of the Service, to have shared its success, and to have gained through it much credit and many friendships, owe to these men all of this, and more. During the four years when they passed through our American offices, and later gave fine measure of their character in France, they were among the first to bear evidence of a spirit which existed in this country behind the quiescence of the first three years of the war — and afterward among the foremost of those who made the larger sacrifice, and won. The pages and roster of this book are testimony enough of the first and final worth of what they gave. Some of them fought and died as they would most have wished. Many of them had opportunity for leadership, and so distinguished themselves; to others chance gave the less inspiring share of obscure service, but where their part held for them only unheroic toil and long months of inaction, they did equally well.

Through the burdens which we have been privileged

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to assume in their support, most of us have probably reached as high a mark of satisfied effort as we shall know. Remembering that, and realizing how much they have passed through that was worth while, we may have sympathy with their problem of the future. If for us there is some poignance in having finished an era of unselfish labor, even less stimulating it must be for younger men to suspect, as some of these doubtless do, that they have reached their zenith. In all the pageantry of war, with its vividness and shadow, many new values have come before them, and their imagination has been quickened so that their question is no longer merely that of "making a living." As we pause on finishing a book that has taken us far out of ourselves, so the majority must feel in having closed the most stirring chapter of their lives. Keen enough, as they have proven, to give their utmost, they are not now content to waste it.

For whatever of discomfort and occasional resentment their days in France may have held, there was compensation in the living drama. There, too, duty was clear, and they knew that in the end the experience would be worth all cost. Finally, they had there companionship and mutual understanding with a greater number of those about them than any other phase of life could bring.

The spirit which led them to France by inclination, before the time of obligation, is the same that in considering the future makes them hesitate to dedicate themselves permanently to a purpose with little human interest. In the maze of possibilities they have come home to face, some may be fortunate in finding their desire; but very many will have to be content with small monotony, unless those of us whose lives are more established can serve them to finer purpose. That they are unconscious of the debt we owe makes the obligation doubly ours. When one of these men cares to bring us the question of his future, we may rightly feel inclined to stand up, not only in tribute to what he has done, and the way he has

done it, but because so largely in him lies the solution of the disorder war has left. It is for us to make him comprehend our confidence in his capacity. If we can put many such men forward with the knowledge of our reliance on their strength and resource in meeting new problems in their own country, as they have met the greater crisis, we shall have done something for them, more for ourselves, and much for posterity.

As a useful factor in Franco-American relations, this small group of volunteers may still prove of value beyond their numerical proportion. With such influence as is theirs by affiliation and training, with their willing sense of responsibility, and of the debt they each wish to pay for the fine friendship and example they found in France, they will do much to see that that which they have won shall not be wasted.

Nor has France forgotten the spirit of our coming. In the spring of 1917, when we were soon to become a part of the American Army, a distinguished French statesman, then on a mission to this country, said: "If in the course of events which are to come the Field Service may seem to lose its identity, that really can never be possible. To every man in our Army it is the finest tribute of friendship you could have paid us; and your work will be always a page in the history of France."

It has become now as fairly a page of credit in American history, that our future compatriots may gratefully read, though they perhaps pass over it with little realization of many values within the obvious story. For each of us who has had even a small part in its making, it is the chapter we shall ever know best by heart, and in relation to the whole sum of our advantage in the doing, these volumes can seem but fragmentary facts and figures, since between the lines for us there lies unwritten so many an example to make clearer the problem of our days.

In the beginning we sought our task with the will to help whenever and however it should prove possible; but just how small our sacrifice was destined to be, in com-

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parison to that of the friends we meant to serve, nor how sure our own compensation, we could not have foreseen. We went forth unknowing. But if we were not deep enough of vision to first approach with fitting deference what were to prove ultimate lights for many of us, nor to suspect how deeply the revelation might govern our perspective, now, after these years, we stand in still respect for what we have learned. In weighing all the privilege and gain this Service must ever find its greatest asset in having served from first to last beside the Army and the people of France — their friends through many dark, immortal days. Constancy to such a relation would in itself have been enough to make its members ever zealous in duty — but even selfishness could have sought no larger profit than that which they have gathered. For most of us it has been truly *sic itur ad astra*, and on that far journey there passed before us a standard good to remember and to uphold in facing whatever part each of us may have yet to do for this country of our own. In going first to France we took what seemed our best, but now returning we have brought a finer thing than ever we were able to put upon the altar of our good intention.

HENRY D. SLEEPER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; American Representative of the Field Service, 1915-16-17; later Director of the A.F.S. Headquarters in France, 1918-19.



## IV

### THE GROWTH OF THE SERVICE

Bien avant, l'âme de la France, courbée sur la tranchée qui arrêtait le flot envahisseur, avait été profondément émue quand elle avait appris, aux heures sombres, qu'en Amérique les actes avaient précédé les paroles.

JULES J. JUSSERAND, 1917

THE story of the American Field Service will be found in the section histories and in the narratives that follow, a story which shows the life that these American volunteers shared with their French comrades for upward of two years. The reader will judge for himself what the Service gave and what its members gained in serving. He will find there, above all, what these three thousand men saw and learned of the French soldier, with whom they considered it a privilege to serve, during the years before America's entry into the war.

The opportunity which these three thousand men enjoyed was necessarily the result of the founding and perfecting of an organization which could fulfil a need of the French Army. It was necessary, not only to foresee its value, but, once this was established, so to organize it as to meet the demands of the army it was serving. It is the purpose of this article to show, by following the growth of the Service, the various steps which had to be taken to meet the continual demands of the Automobile Service of the French Army; and it will be seen that these demands kept growing as the Service gained in efficiency and size.

It is of interest to note that not only was there no precedent to follow, but also that the ever-changing needs of war continually called for unforeseen developments of the Service. This was a task which required confidence, vision, and courage in its leadership. Mr. Andrew realized, from the moment of its first success in

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1915, that in perfecting the organization in every detail he was laying a foundation which could be built upon as money and volunteers were forthcoming. His task from then on was twofold: first, to maintain the standard of efficiency of the sections; and, secondly, to increase the Service as rapidly as possible. That he accomplished this task the story of the Service will show. Its accomplishment meant not only the transportation of hundreds of thousands of French wounded, thousands of tons of shells and supplies, but also, and what was, perhaps, of equal importance, the exertion of an ever-increasing influence on American thought and sympathy in favor of France and the Allied Cause.

This chapter can be divided into three distinct parts — for each of the three years was distinguished by certain results — results upon which the following year's plans and work were based. The first year saw the success of the initial conception of the Service; the second year showed relatively small but very definite growth, and gave a full participation of the Service, with the complete confidence of the French Army, in the great battle of Verdun. In addition, the organization in America was developed and experience was gained in this branch which gave, in the third year, thirty-three ambulance sections and fourteen transport sections to the French armies at a most necessary time, for the hardest of battles were to be fought this year at many places along the front. Moreover, it insured the incorporation of both branches of the Service in the United States Army.

### 1915

In the month of April, 1915, all the preliminary arrangements for a volunteer ambulance service on the front had been completed. These arrangements had proved no easy task, for the French authorities had had some bitter experiences with spies masquerading as neutrals and much disillusionment as to the value of amateur war-workers. They were slow to be convinced that an organ-

ization composed entirely of amateur neutrals could give any real service. They had been perfectly willing to use volunteers in the evacuation of hospitals in the rear zone, but it was not until Mr. Andrew had succeeded in persuading these authorities that young American volunteers were more fitted for work at the front, and had guaranteed that only those whose loyalty to the Allies was unmistakable would be allowed to serve, that at last they permitted sections to be formed under army standards. So, in April, three sections were partially formed from the volunteers and cars which had heretofore been serving in scattered squads. These sections, when completed, consisted of twenty ambulances, a staff car, a supply car, each with a personnel of an American *Commandant-Adjoint* and about twenty-five drivers, in addition to the French personnel. *Section Sanitaire Américaine № 1*, as it was officially called, being formed from squads already working near Dunkirk, was at first stationed in that vicinity; *Section Sanitaire Américaine № 2* was organized in Paris and sent to Lorraine; *Section Sanitaire Américaine № 3* was also formed in Paris, and was ordered to the Vosges Mountains.

The service rendered by these three sections during this year was one of real achievement which went even beyond what had been hoped for. Section One, having given an excellent account of itself in the long-range bombardments and air raids at Dunkirk, was rewarded by being entrusted with important work in Belgium at Coxyde, Nieuport, Poperinghe, Elverdinghe, Crombeke, and other *postes de secours* during the battles along the Yser. Section Two had to win recognition in a region already served by a French sanitary section and to which it was attached to do secondary work. The Section not only accomplished its own work, but made it possible for the French section to be withdrawn from this sector, the Americans taking over the *postes de secours* in and near Bois le Prêtre, a sector at that time renowned for its continual and heavy fighting. Section Three was entrusted with a



STEPHEN GALATTI



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sector in which, previously, automobile evacuations could only be performed far back of the lines owing to the mountainous country. The Section was able to send its light cars up over the narrow mountain roads to the *postes* near Metzeral and at Hartmannsweilerkopf, thus substituting automobiles for mules which had been, up to that time, the only means of transporting wounded.

The three sections had faced three separate transportation problems. In Belgium, the cobblestone roads with the deep mud had proved no obstacle; at Pont-à-Mousson, the heavy *ravitaillement* convoys had not slowed up the small ambulances; in the Vosges Mountains, the steep grades had given the opportunity for the replacement of the mule. There could be no doubt that the light car which had been selected was an admirable choice and that it had fulfilled every test of front-line work.

Although the solution of mechanical difficulties was of vital importance, the success of these three Sections was due at least as much to the type of men who had volunteered for this service. Already the universities were furnishing the largest quota of men. They brought to their work youth and intelligence, initiative and courage.

In November, 1915, at the request of General Headquarters, a fourth section took its place in the field — perhaps the greatest proof of the efficiency of the three early sections.

The year 1915 closed with three sections well established and a fourth finding its place on the line. The initial problems of section organization and section relationship with the French Army had been defined, and four French divisions were being officially served by American volunteer ambulance sections.

### 1916

It was evident at the beginning of 1916 that the Service now firmly established at the front was the natural expression of that desire to give active and personal aid felt by many Americans. To those who were in the Serv-

ice, and who knew what man-power meant to France, even at that time, it would have been a betrayal of their own action if they had not wished others to follow their example.

To pursue this policy, it was necessary to give publicity in America to the work the American Field Service was accomplishing as well as to lay plans for the probable expansion of the organization. It was a suitable period for this work. The early winter, from the point of view of the sections, was not an active one. Section One, attached to a colonial division had moved to the Somme; Section Two was still at Pont-à-Mousson; Section Three had moved from Alsace at the end of January to *repos* near Nancy; and Section Four was receiving its baptism in the rather quiet Toul Sector.

The material for a book, *Friends of France*, was collected and sent to America; moving pictures were arranged for with the help of the French Government, with a view, not only of showing at home what the Service was accomplishing, but especially of presenting through the eyes of these American volunteers the appeal of the Army with which they were serving and the truth of its cause.

As for the interior organization of the Service itself, a new system for the repair work of the cars was established. Previously spare parts and Ford *chassis* had been bought from the Ford Company in France to meet the current demands of the sections. With an enlargement of the Service, this hand-to-mouth policy was inadequate, and it was wisely decided to import parts from America and to organize a repair park, which was not only to serve as an overhauling and assembling park for ambulances, but also as a warehouse and distribution point for spare parts. The office and the quarters for the new men needed also to be changed. In the American Ambulance Hospital in Neuilly, which up to this time had served as the Field Service Headquarters, there was only space in a little outhouse (comprising one room and a telephone booth) for the office, while the attic of the hospital was the only

available dormitory for the men. It was hard to find a place which would be adequate, but fortunately no hasty decision was taken and the problem was eventually solved by the generous gift of the spacious house and grounds at 21 rue Raynouard. A mistake in moving to quarters smaller than these would have resulted in a difficult situation later on.

The spring and early summer of 1916 brought great activity for the Service. Late in February Section Two moved to the Verdun sector, where it was assigned first of all to the service of evacuation from *triage* to H.O.E. This service is the hardest test for a volunteer ambulance section, for it means long runs on crowded roads without the excitement of front work, still harder here in the Verdun battle, where the first great test of automobile transportation was forced on the French. The faithfulness with which this task was performed during those interminable months proved that, under difficult circumstances, even long evacuations could be handled well by the light Field Service cars. Section Four moved to Verdun from the Toul sector early in June with *postes* on the left bank of the Meuse, the *poste* at Marre being not two hundred yards from the German lines. Section Three was the next to take its turn. Ordered from Maxeville on the 20th of June with its division, it arrived near Verdun at one of the most critical periods of this long battle. Its division was placed in the line on the right bank of the Meuse, the Section serving the *poste* at Bras and evacuating directly to Verdun. It was at this point that the Germans nearly broke through, and the road was under continual bombardment, the village of Fleury, to which it led, being taken and retaken several times. The division was taken out after a week and the Section went on a well-earned *repos*, curiously enough to Pont-à-Mousson, the old home of Section Two. The Bras *poste* later became familiar to many sections; Four, Eight, Nine, Eighteen, Sixty-Four, and Sixty-Nine having especially difficult evacuations there. Long after Section

Three had left, Barber's car, smashed by a shell, still stood as a landmark by the side of the road.

Section Eight, formed in Paris in June, 1916, and sent to Champagne for a week, was transferred to Verdun, with its cantonment at Dugny on the right bank of the Meuse, and its *postes* at the Fort de Tavannes and the Cabaret Rouge.

Section One saw two days of the bombardment which ushered in the battle of the Somme, and then, to their dismay, received orders to move. To have worked for months in a sector, knowing every road, every position, not only of one's own division, but of the enemy's, to know an attack was coming, to prepare for its every possible phase, and then, just as it was starting, to be ordered away, was unquestionably bitter medicine for an ambulance section. But there was consolation in the fact that orders were soon picked up to go to Verdun, and a day later, Section One drew up alongside of Section Eight at Dugny and instantly ran into difficult and dangerous work. Section Eight moved *en repos* to Lorraine, and Section One soon after received a *repos* only to go back to the same position for another hard period.

The activity at the front was reflected at Headquarters. The five sections had made necessarily large demands for material to keep up their efficiency. New cars and parts had to be sent out without delay. It was at this moment also that heavy repair cars, kitchen trailers, and trucks could be issued to the sections, through generous gifts, thus insuring their capacity and independence as units. Headquarters activity, however, was not confined to the supplying and administration of the sections. The plans of the winter had become realities. The repair park at Billancourt was an actual fact. A large building had been rented within Kellner's factory, where the ambulance bodies were constructed. Machinery was installed, and mechanics were, by May, at work repairing and assembling cars. A large stock-room within the building with each spare part in its own numbered bin was already

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filled with the first direct shipment from America. In June the park was no longer an experiment. The proof was Section Nine, which, one early morning in the latter part of the month, received its cars there and rolled out to Versailles — the first step on its long journey to Alsace. In July the Headquarters were thoroughly established and adequate offices permitted independence of action. Extensive dormitories and a refectory offered a home, not only to the newly arrived volunteers, but to *permis-sionnaires*<sup>1</sup> and to those returning to America. It was at this time also that Bordeaux and Le Havre became principal points in our sphere of action. *Chassis* arriving there had to be assembled and driven overland. A group of schoolboy volunteers, only able to enlist for the summer, helped in this necessary work. Thus it was possible to take advantage of those wonderful summer days to lay the basis for the next winter, for it took at least three months from the shipment of a *chassis* from America for it to be placed in commission as an ambulance.

It was at the end of this year that we received the first tangible evidence of the fact that our Service was one that the French felt they could count on as really being a part of their army and not simply an auxiliary service. In September, 1916, the French Automobile Service asked if we could send a section of our light cars to the Balkans, it being their opinion that the evacuation work in that difficult region could be most efficiently done by one of our sections. The request addressed to us to send a section so far away from the base was also an indication of the confidence in which the personnel of our Service was held, although at that time we were only serving six French divisions. It was a request which we felt we should meet, primarily because the men of our Service felt very keenly that wherever the French Army must go, we should go. The French Army had accepted us and permitted us to participate in the greatest battles: Could

<sup>1</sup> The Field Service volunteers were treated as French soldiers, receiving permissions every four months.

we refuse, which was technically easy, to go to the Orient because it was not a popular assignment? Section Three did not think so. Their Section Commander, Lovering Hill, and the French Lieutenant, Déröde (who could have refused on account of ill-health), were as eager as the men, many of whom had been with the Section since its formation eighteen months before.

Twenty-four hours after the agreement had been made, the Section arrived in Paris, having made the trip from Lorraine. Extra cars and a supply of spare parts for at least six months were furnished out of the stock which had been ordered for just such an emergency. Not many days later, the order came for the departure of the Section, and that night at a freight station in the outskirts of Paris the men boarded the train which was to take them and their material to Marseilles, the first lap of their long journey.

The departure of Section Three marked the inevitable closing of a chapter in the history of the Service. It was a chapter of intimate association made possible by the throwing together of less than 200 young men of the same education and ideas at a time when there seemed little hope that their countrymen would take up the cause they had made their own. Furloughs brought men from different sections together in the comfortable home at rue Raynouard, at a time when, more than at any other, Paris reflected the attitude of the soldiers who were defending her at the front. This close association and friendship, afterwards, when the Service grew to much larger proportions, found its expression in the sections.

With the Service in France ready for expansion and the French Automobile Service insisting not only that our present sections must be maintained, but that it would be of inestimable value if we could form more sections, it was vital that the American Field Service should make every effort to meet this demand. Since the battle of Verdun it had become evident that the Automobile Service of the army must be developed; that on it depended the

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quick movement of troops and supplies which so many times afterwards turned defeat into victory. For every sanitary section that the American Field Service could send to the front, an equal number of Frenchmen would be released for other branches of the Automobile Service. With this in view, Mr. Andrew went to America, and with Mr. Sleeper's aid, laid the basis of an organization there which was destined to furnish substantial results soon after.

### 1917

THE year 1917 was destined to be one of little rest for any one connected with the Service. Very shortly after Mr. Andrew's return, two demands came from General Headquarters which proved beyond doubt that they felt they were dealing with a Service which they could count on as their own. They asked for another section to go to the Balkans and for a detachment of ambulances to be sent to the Vosges Mountains in Alsace. The first demand was complied with by forming Section Ten, under the command of Henry Suckley whose long experience and capacity fitted him well for this task. The request for the Vosges Detachment was a tribute to the effective service of the type of ambulance modelled by this Service, for since the example set by Section Three, it was found that no French section could do the work of this difficult region so well.

The early winter proved a very hard one for the sections at the front. Sections One, Two, and Four were in line on the left bank of the Meuse and in the Argonne, shifting their stations once or twice, but all taking their turn at the *postes* of Esnes, Montzéville, Hill 272, and Marre, where the roads were always dangerous even when there was no attack, and always muddy and difficult. Section Eight travelled to the Somme during the last part of the offensive and then travelled back to Verdun on the Bras run. Section Nine took its turn at Bras and then went to Lorraine. Section Twelve came to the front

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in January, relieving Section One on the Esnes run, getting there its full baptism of fire.

An interesting custom began this winter with the giving of farewell dinners to the sections on the eve of their departure for the front. The custom had been inaugurated by Section Nine, but the first two dinners were only informal gatherings. Their tone, however, gave the idea of making them more formal by inviting prominent Frenchmen and Americans, who by their friendly and inspiring speeches made these evenings memorable. What member of Section Twelve will ever forget M. Hugues Le Roux's story of his son who had gone to the battle front with a fresh enthusiasm such as theirs and who, although almost immediately mortally wounded, would not allow himself to be carried back until after his wounded soldiers had been attended to, thus facing hours of agony and torment. A fitting son to the father, who, while thanking these volunteers for the service they were giving his country, taught us all that great lesson of patriotism which was making France supreme. Each dinner had its special charm, but whether the speaker was American or French, soldier or civilian, the theme of service and respect for the country we were serving was always predominant. After the United States entered the war, we heard our Ambassador, at last able to speak as he felt; and at the same dinner, M. Jules Cambon, and later, Captain (now General) Churchill. At other dinners we heard inspiring addresses by Captain Puaux, who had been on General Joffre's staff; Lieutenant René Puaux, who had served on the staff of General Foch; representatives of the French G.H.Q.; Mr. Frank Simonds, Mr. Will Irwin, President John H. Finley, Abbé Dimnet, and many others. Surely all honor was being paid to the men as they left for their place at the front.

In the early spring six more ambulance sections were placed at the disposal of the French armies; Section Thirteen, which went to Champagne and took part in the great April French offensive; Section Fourteen, to Lor-



Boxed chassis waiting to be assembled



Preparations for the departure of a section. Section Fifteen  
almost ready to leave for the front

THE GARDEN AT 21 RUE RAYNOUARD



## INTRODUCTION

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raine; Section Fifteen to Verdun, its first car being hit by shrapnel near the *poste* at Esnes less than fifty-four hours after leaving Paris; Section Sixteen, to the Argonne, where it stayed for nine months; and Sections Seventeen and Eighteen, to the Second Army Reserve.

The declaration of war by the United States brought grave decisions for those who were responsible for the Service. The physical fact which stood out on April 4, 1917, was that here in France was a volunteer American organization growing in size and, as it grew, filling much-needed vacancies in the non-combatant branch of the Automobile Service of the French Army. When on April 5, Mr. Andrew telephoned to Commandant Doumenc, the Head of the Automobile Service, and asked him in what way the American Field Service, now that America had come into the war, could help the French Army best, the answer came back immediately over the telephone requesting seven thousand drivers for *camions* as soon as possible under the same conditions as governed the functioning of the ambulance sections of the Field Service. There was one indisputable lesson the three years of war had taught, and that was, that nothing less than the greatest effort in whatever capacity was worth while. Could the American Field Service, whose record had always been to try and meet to its fullest capacity whatever demands had been made on it, refuse now to make every attempt to further its capacity in a branch of service for which it was especially fitted? It would have been easy to have confined our efforts to ambulance sections, the field in which the Service had been working, but its growth would have been restricted to four sections a month, restrictions due to the average amount of gifts being received at this time, due to delay in transportation, due to lack of facilities for building bodies, the only available builders having diverted most of their energies to aeroplane construction. By extending its functions, the Service could be of greater immediate aid to the French Army, at the same time keeping up its output of ambulance sec-

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tions, and this at a time when there was no indication as to whether the United States would send an expeditionary force, and even if so, how large a one. The decision was taken and a cable was sent to America explaining that volunteers were needed for this new Service, and that hereafter the two branches of Service would be considered as one, volunteers being assignable wherever they could be of most use. The effects of the urgent request for men from America soon began to bear results. Volunteers began to stream over in May and June, as many as five hundred arriving within three days. To cope with this influx, barracks and tents were erected in the garden at rue Raynouard, and a house near by was put at our disposal by the same generous friends to whom we owed rue Raynouard. Three camps were established for the training of these men, their large numbers making Paris now an impossible centre for this purpose. The ambulance camp was established at May-en-Multien, a picturesque farm belonging to a friend of the Service, on the road between Meaux and Soissons, and the transport camps near Dommiers and Longpont, a few kilometres south of Soissons. Volunteers only remained in Paris for such time as was needed to obtain uniforms and necessary papers, being then sent out to the respective camps.

The first unit to go to the transport camp was a Cornell unit which volunteered to take up this new work. It was followed by a Dartmouth unit; then by California, Princeton, Marietta, and Tufts units. Dartmouth, Princeton, Harvard, and Yale units were also sent to the ambulance camp, and every effort was made to form them into sections according to their units.

Another development of this period was the opening of the French Officers' Automobile School at Meaux to members of the American Field Service, a privilege extended only to Field Service men. This action was taken primarily to train our men so that they would be capable of commanding transport sections, but it was also intended to give the American officers of the ambulance

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sections sufficient technical knowledge to enable them ultimately to handle their sections without a French officer. It was stated at French headquarters that with the part the American Field Service was now playing, it was essential that their American commanders should be familiar with all the details of the French Automobile Service. The first class was more in the nature of an experiment, and so only fifteen men were admitted, but the later classes were each opened to forty of our men.

Now came the period which saw the Service at the height of its development, namely, the spring and summer of 1917. During these months the sections and individuals did work of which they will always be proud. Let us take the ambulance sections first. Section One had moved to the Aisne, just west of Reims, in a sector which, although quiet, cost them two comrades. Nineteen-sixteen history, however, repeated itself, and again they came to Verdun during a great battle, being once more stationed at their old *poste* on the right side of the Meuse. It was a privilege this time to place their cantonment where formerly they had only dared go to advanced *postes* at night, but their work was even more difficult and more dangerous in this second great battle of Verdun and they well merited their Army Citation. Section Two, which had been in the Fourth Army Reserve, also came back to its old *poste* at Esnes and Hill 272, and later at Marre, also its most trying period. Section Four was in Champagne during the French attack of Mont Cornillet with Section Thirteen as its neighbor, the latter also winning an Army Citation. Section Four then moved to Verdun, running now past Bras, on to Vacherauville. Section Eight remained at Sainte-Ménehould. Section Fourteen came from Lorraine for the attack in Champagne, then was sent on *repos*. Section Fifteen worked in the Verdun and Argonne sectors, its Commander, Earl Osborn, being wounded as he was taking over a new *poste*. Section Sixteen remained in the Argonne until relieved by Section Thirty-Three; its *poste* was to the left of the attack-

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ing line, but in the midst of batteries, which made it one of the worst sectors for an ambulance section. Section Seventeen at first evacuated to the rear, but later took over advanced *postes* to the right of Section Sixteen. Section Eighteen got its chance for a week on the Verdun-Bras-Vacherauville road. Section Nineteen was in the Argonne to the left of Section Sixteen. Section Twenty-Six was in the Saint-Mihiel sector, a quiet one, but earned a citation during an enemy air raid. Sections Twenty-Seven and Twenty-Eight were in Champagne, the latter having the trying and dangerous sector where Osborn was killed and two men wounded during their first week of work. Section Twenty-Nine replaced Section Two on the Montzéville-Esnes run, the nature of the work being evidenced by the loss of Newlin and the wounding of their *Chef*, Julian Allen. Section Thirty did evacuation work at Dugny, where its men learned Boche methods when aviators bombed and mitrailleused the hospital to which they were attached. Sections Thirty-One and Thirty-Two were both in the battle before they were taken over by the United States Army, the former on the left bank of the Meuse and the latter on the right bank. Section Sixty-Four at first did evacuation work, but it, and Section Sixty-Nine, took their turn later on the Verdun-Bras road. Sections Sixty-Five and Sixty-Six were at the Chemin des Dames, working at *postes* side by side and made an enviable record in that active sector. Bentley, Hamilton, and Gailey gave their lives in this sector. Sections Sixty-Seven and Seventy were on the Aisne during the strenuous summer activity there which finally culminated in the battle of Malmaison, and Section Sixty-Eight did evacuation work in Champagne. Sections Seventy-One and Seventy-Two were to the west in Picardy in sectors which looked out on Saint-Quentin.

Finally far away on the Balkan front Section Three was back in the Monastir sector, after having been chosen on account of its adaptability to the mountainous transport conditions to follow a French division into Greece, and

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Section Ten was following an Allied advance in the wilderness of Albania.

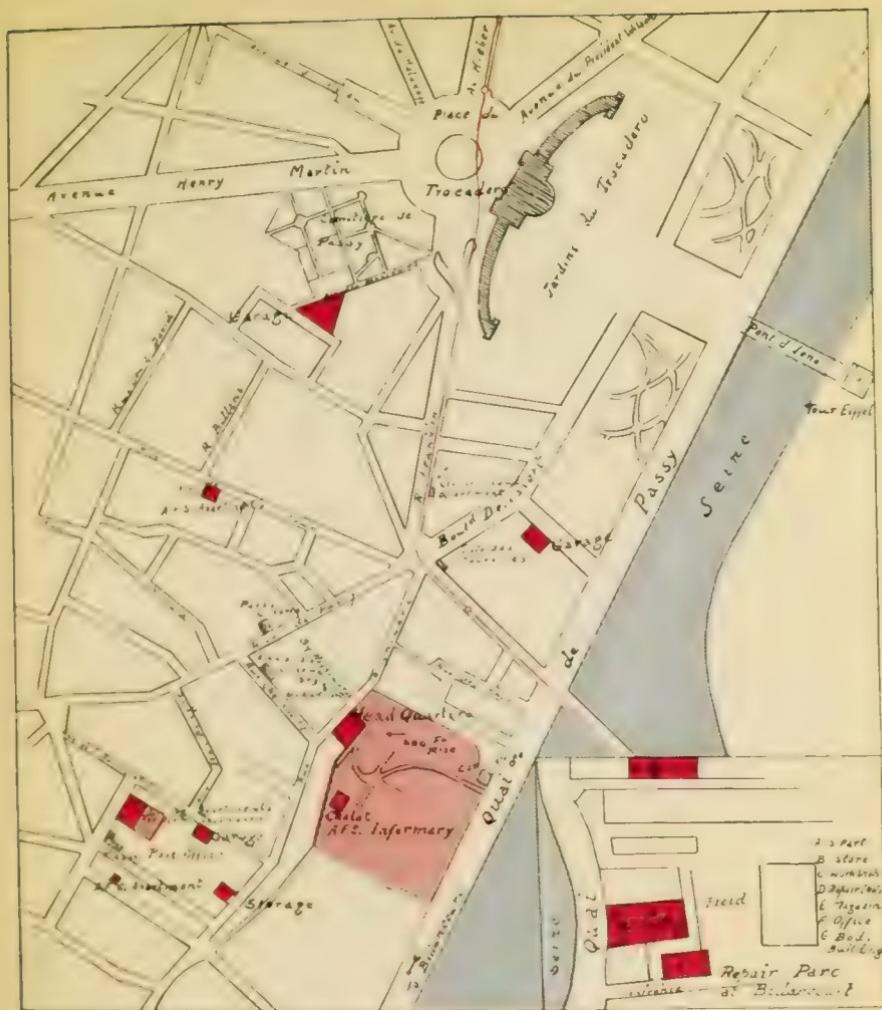
The transport sections, formed in groups in the *Réserve Mallet*, were busy carrying ammunition and supplies in preparation for the Chemin des Dames offensive. The work of these eight hundred men, although confined to one area, brought them to all the battery emplacements in this region, not only difficult runs, but dangerous as well.

The last months of 1917 marked the transition period when both branches of the Service were transferred to the United States Army. The organization of the United States Army did not permit of an automobile service, so the decision was made that the *Réserve Mallet* would be taken over by the Quartermaster Corps and the Ambulance Service would be taken over by the United States Army Ambulance Service with the French Army, a special bill having been passed by Congress to make possible this new arrangement.

There were many volunteers who, through previous experience or through desire, wished to enlist or obtain commissions in the other branches of the American Army. On the other hand, they had contracted engagements as volunteers in the French Army for six months. It was a difficult situation for all concerned, because the French Army was dependent on the Service to its full capacity, especially at a time when hard fighting was going on all along the line. Until the regular army replacements could reach France in substitution for the volunteers who did not wish to enlist in the two army branches with which they were serving at the time, the French Army could not release them from their contracts. As it proved this delay did not impair the chances of these men. The other services were not yet ready to train them and the long list of commissions in every branch of the United States Army received by American Field Service volunteers indicates that there was little loss in opportunity due to the fulfilment of their pledge.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE SERVICE

THE enrolment of the American Field Service by the United States Army terminated the history of the Service. The record of the organization depended very much on the spirit of service shown by the early volunteers of 1914 and 1915. Their example and understanding became the standard which was passed on, not only in the old sections, but in the new ones, a standard which formed a discipline worthy of the Army to which they were attached. The names of all these volunteers are in the roster, but it seems fitting to recall a few of them whose personality and influence helped especially to shape the Service: Lovering Hill, who arrived in France in 1914, and, beginning with the pioneer days, was given command of Section Three in June, 1915, then after eighteen months on the western front, took his section to the Balkans for another year, his four personal citations proving the example he set; Herbert Townsend, whose leadership of Section One installed a standard which won for that section four citations; Henry Suckley, who, after long service as *Sous-Chef* of Section Three, took Section Ten to the Balkans, giving his life there in the Service in which, as a leader, he had set an example of devotion to the cause he knew to be right; Robert Moss, in charge of the repair and construction park from its inception until the Service was taken into the Army; John R. Fisher, who so successfully commanded the Ambulance Training-Camp at May-en-Multien; Alan H. Muhr, Controller from 1915 to 1917 and subsequently leader of Section Fourteen; John H. MacFadden, Treasurer, who so successfully aided in the collection of funds in America; Philip K. Potter, who represented the Field Service in command of the *Réserve Mallet*; and William de Ford Bigelow and A. D. Dodge, with their records of long service as leaders of Sections Four and Eight, respectively, and subsequently their earnest labors and assistance as *aides* in the Paris headquarters.



## FIELD SERVICE QUARTERS AND DÉPÔTS IN PASSY AND BILLANCOURT



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This chapter deals only with the part the American Field Service played as a part of the armies of France. The record of wounded and supplies carried by the two Services and the two hundred and fifty decorations conferred by the divisions served, indicates the character of work rendered. The recognition by the United States Army of the two Services for which special provision had to be made, a recognition which was made at the request of the French Army, proved conclusively how vital was the continuation of this aid to the French Army. To judge further of its importance, one has only to see the part the Service was playing in the two great battles that were being fought on the western front at the time it was taken over by the United States Army.

From July until October, 1917, the *Réserve Mallet* had transported ammunition, engineering supplies, thousands upon thousands of shells day and night in preparation for the Chemin des Dames attack. The outstanding feature of this attack was the complete destruction by the artillery of all the strong positions of the enemy, which resulted in the infantry attack being such a brilliant one, with few losses. It was the fourteen Field Service sections of volunteer *camion* drivers serving with the *Réserve Mallet*, with their French comrades, who transported from the railheads to the batteries practically all the ammunition. Recognition of this fact is seen in Commandant Doumenc's report to Mr. Andrew in which, referring to the Transport Service, he says: "*C'est elle qui a assuré la plus grosse part des transports de munitions, au moment des attaques heureuses qui porterent la 6<sup>e</sup> Armée sur l'Ailette.*"

In the Verdun offensive in which the French regained in a few days all the territory which they had lost to the Germans in the great battle of 1916, American Field Service sections attached to divisions evacuated the wounded in practically every sector of the Verdun front from Sainte-Ménehould through the Argonne on both sides of the Meuse, and as far as the Saint-Mihiel sector.

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Sections One, Two, Four, Thirteen, Fifteen, Sixteen, Seventeen, Eighteen, Nineteen, Twenty-Six, Thirty, Thirty-One, Thirty-Two, Sixty-Four, and Sixty-Nine took part at one time or another. The effectiveness of their service gained for them a place in the headlines of the *Intransigeant*, the popular evening newspaper of Paris, where in referring to the progress of the battle it was stated: "*Et surtout les ambulances américaines ont marchés à merveille.*"

STEPHEN GALATTI<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Served continuously in France from September, 1915, until May, 1919; member of Section Three in 1915; Assistant Head of the American Field Service from January, 1916; Commissioned Captain in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service in October, 1917, and later promoted to Major.



# *The Ambulance Sections*

## *Section One*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. HENRY SYDNROR HARRISON
- II. JOSHUA G. B. CAMPBELL
- III. TRACY JACKSON PUTNAM
- IV. ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE
- V. ROY H. STOCKWELL
- VI. JOHN H. McFADDEN, JR.
- VII. WILLIAM YORKE STEVENSON
- VIII. EDWARD A. G. WYLIE

## SUMMARY

SECTION ONE left Paris for Dunkirk on January 20, 1915. The latter part of March it was moved to Malo-les-Bains. From there it went on April 6 to Wormhoudt, to be ordered back later to Dunkirk. On April 22 it went to Woesten near Ypres. Later half the Section went to Elverdinghe.

In June ten ambulances were at Dunkirk and the remainder of the Section was transferred to Coxyde, Belgium, the *postes* being situated at Nieuport and Nieuport-Bains. On July 20 the entire Section was sent to Crombeke in Flanders.

On December 22 of the same year the Section moved near Beauvais, *en repos*. In January, 1916, it moved to Jaulzy, in February to Cortieux, and then to Méricourt-sur-Somme. From here it was suddenly ordered, on June 22, 1916, to Bar-le-Duc, behind the Verdun front, going from there to Dugny, where it arrived June 28. On July 13 it went *en repos* at Tannois, Givry-en-Argonne, Triaucourt, and Vaubécourt, all in the Argonne region. On the 15th of August it moved to Château Billemont. On September 11 it spent three days *en repos* at Triaucourt, and then moved to La Grange-aux-Bois, between the Argonne and Verdun sectors.

On January 19, 1917, the Section again went to Triaucourt *en repos*, following which it moved to Ippécourt. January 25 found it at Dombasle-en-Argonne, and the 14th of March at Vadelaincourt in the Verdun sector, *en repos*. On April 17 it moved to Muizon, ten kilometres west of Reims, and on June 21 to Louvois. It spent a *repos*, beginning July 23, at Évres. August saw it at Houdainville and later at the Caserne Béveaux. On September 14 it moved to a peaceful little village in the Jeanne d'Arc country, where it ended its career as a part of the Field Service, becoming thereafter Section Six-Twenty-Five of the U.S. Army Ambulance Service, with the French Army.



## *Section One*

Mon corps à la terre,  
Mon âme à Dieu,  
Mon cœur à la France.

### I

#### DUNKIRK AND YPRES

IN June, 1915, it was the pride of the Section in Flanders, Section One, to feel that it had come closer to war than any other formation of the American Ambulance. In June, 1916, when these lines were written, the point of pride was to know that those first intense experiences had long since been duplicated and eclipsed.

In Dunkirk we witnessed, and within our powers tried to cope with, what yet remains, I believe, one of the most sensational artillery exploits in history. It is remembered that the little cars of the Americans often ran those empty streets, and pursued those deafening detonations, alone. At our base, Dunkirk, we shared the life of a town under sporadic, but devastating, bombardment; forward, in Elverdinghe, we shared the life of a town under perpetual, and also devastating, bombardment; still farther forward, in Ypres, we beheld a town bombarded from the face of the earth in a single night. There we shared no life, nor yet in Nieuport, for there was none to share. In the salient around Ypres we played for many days our small part in that vast and various activity forever going on at the

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back of the front. There we saw and learned things not easily to be forgotten; the diverse noises of shells going and coming, of *arrivées* and *départs*; the stupendous uproar of the "duel" before the charge, which makes the deepening quiet of a run back come like a balm and a blessing; the strange informality of roadside batteries, booming away in the sight of peasant families and every passer; the silence and the stillness, and the tenseness and the business, of night along the lines; the extreme difficulty of hiding from shrapnel successfully without a dug-out; the equal difficulty of driving successfully down a shell-bitten road in darkness like ink; the glow against the sky of a burning town, and the bright steady dots of starlight around half the horizon; the constant straggle of the evicted by the field ambulance's front door, and the fast-growing cemetery at the back door; the whine and patter of bullets by the *postes de secours* and the business-like ripple of the machine guns; the whir of Taubes, the practical impossibility of hitting them from the ground, and the funny little bombs sometimes dropped by the same; the noises made by men gone mad with pain; the glorious quiet of men under the acetylene lamps of the operating-table; "crowd psychology," and why a regiment becomes a "fighting machine," and how tender hearts are indurated with a toughening of the skin; the high prevalence of courage among the sons of men; drawbacks of sleeping on a stretcher in an ambulance; the unkemptness of Boche prisoners; life, death, and war, and the values and meanings thereof.

Such things, as I know, passed into the experience of Section One, in Flanders. And these things, and more, have similarly passed into the experience of scores of young Americans since, in their life and service behind the lines of France.

It is the composite experience which the following pages narrate; it is the composite service which the mind holds to with most satisfaction. We were the *Service Sanitaire Américaine*; a proud title, and we wished, naturally,

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to invest it with the realest meaning. That the American service was rendered efficiently and even valuably, this History as a whole attests, I think. That it was rendered with the requisite indifference to personal risk is also, I hope, supported by the record. A transient in the service, who by no means bore the burden and heat of the day, may be permitted, I trust, to say these necessary, or at least these interesting and pertinent things with complete detachment.

I remember the hour of Section One's "baptism of fire." We stood in the lee (or what we hoped was the lee) of the Petit Château at Elverdinghe, while German shells whistled over our heads and burst with a wicked crash about the little church, the typical target, a couple of hundred yards away. (What interest we felt when a fragment of shell, smoking hot, fell almost at our feet, and what envy of the man who gathered in this first memorable "*souvenir*"!) We were just down from Dunkirk; we were greener than the grass that blew; and that the novel proceedings were acutely interesting to us all will never be denied. Perhaps each of us secretly wondered to himself if he was going to be afraid; certainly all of us must have wished, with some anxiousness, that those strange whistles and roars would turn themselves another way. And still, when the young Englishman who ran the ambulance service there appeared at that moment and asked for two cars to go down the road to Brielen (which was to go straight toward the trouble), it is pleasant to remember that there was no lack of volunteers, and two of my companions were cranking up at once. There was never any time later, I am sure, when the sense of personal danger was so vivid in the minds of so many of us together.

### BAD QUARTERS OF AN HOUR

EVERY ambulance-driver must have his bad quarters of an hour, no doubt — and some of the worst of them may concern not himself at all, but his car or his wounded. And if it is said that these young Americans, amateurs

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and volunteers, have acquitted themselves well in sometimes trying circumstances, there is no intention to over-emphasize this aspect of their service. A volume might be written on the developmental reactions — all but mathematical in their working — of war-time. Nor does it seem necessary to add that the risk of the *ambulanciers*, at the worst, is small in comparison with that of those whom they serve and from whom in turn they get their inspiration, — the intrepid youths in the trenches.

We came to know these youths very well — the gallant and charming *poilus* who have so long carried the Western Front upon their shoulders. We sincerely admired them; and on them largely we formed our opinions of France, and of the war generally, and of war.

From the standpoint of observation, indeed, — and doubtless it is observation one should try to record here, — I believe we all felt the peculiar advantage of our position to have been this, that we mingled with the soldiers on something like equal terms. We were not officers; we were not distinguished visitors dashing up in a staff car for an hour of sight-seeing. We were rankers (so far as we were anything), and we were permanent; and in the necessities of our work, we touched the life of the common fighting man at every hour of the day and night, and under almost every conceivable circumstance. We were with the *poilus* in the hour of rout and disaster; we were with them in the flush of a victorious charge brilliantly executed. We crawled along roads blocked for miles with them, moving forward; we wormed into railroad stations swamped with the tide of their wounded. Now we heard their boyish fun, and shared their jokes in the fine free days off duty; and now we heard from the unseen well of the jolting car, their faint entreaty, "*Doucement! Doucement!*" We saw them distressed by the loss of their precious *sacs*, or elated by the gift of a button or a cheese; we saw them again in silence and the darkness beside the Yser, very quiet and busy, with the ping and whine of many rifles; and again we found them lying on straw in

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dim-lit stables, bloody and silent, but not defeated. Now they gave us tobacco and souvenirs, and told us of their *gosses*, and helped us tinker with our cars, about which some of them, mechanicians in happier days, knew so much more than we did; and now they died in our ambulances, and sometimes went mad. We saw them gay, and we saw them gassed; we found them idling or writing letters on the running-boards of our cars, and we found the dark stains of their fading lives upon our stretchers; we passed them stealing up like stalwart ghosts to action, and we left them lying in long brown rows beside the old roads of Flanders.

### THE DOMINANT NOTE OF THE POILU

AND to me at least it seemed that the dominant note and characteristic quality of the *poilu*, and all his intense activity, was just a disciplined matter-of-factness, a calm, fine, business-like efficiency, an utter absence of all heroics. Of his heroism, it is superfluous to speak now. My observation convinced me indeed, that fortitude is everywhere more common and evident, not less, than even rhapsodical writers have represented. There seems literally no limit to the powers of endurance of the human animal, once he is put to it. Many writers have written of the awful groanings of the wounded. I must say that, though I have seen thousands of wounded, the groans I have heard could almost be counted upon the fingers of my hand. Only once in my experience do I remember seeing any signs of excitement or disorder. That was in the roads around Poperinghe, in the first threatening hours of the second battle of Ypres. Once only did I get any impression of human terror. And that was only a reminiscence, left behind by women and children in the tumbled empty houses of Ypres. But in all the heroism, unlimited and omnipresent, there is observed, as I say, little or no heroics. That entire absence of drum and fife, which strikes and arrests all beholders at the front, is significant and symbolic. These men muster and move

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forward to the risk of death almost as other men take the subway and go downtown to business. There are no fanfares at all, no grand gestures, no flourishes about the soul and "*la gloire*."

It is true, no doubt, that the ambulance-driver views the scene from a somewhat specialized angle. His principal association is with the sequelæ of war; his view is too much the hospital view. Yet, it must be insisted, he becomes quickly and strangely callous on these points; and on the whole would be less likely to overstress the mere horrors than some one who had not seen so much of them. On the other hand, as I have suggested, he has extraordinary opportunities for viewing war as a thing at once of many parts and of a marvellously organized unity.

### A FATEFUL DAY AT POPERINGHE

PERSONALLY I think that my sharpest impression of war as a whole came to me, not along the *postes de secours* or under the guns at all, but at the station place, in the once obscure little town of Poperinghe, on April 23, 1915.

That, it will be remembered, was a fateful day. At five o'clock in the afternoon before (everybody was perfectly specific about the hour), there had begun the great movement now known as the Second Battle of Ypres (or of the Yser). The assault had begun with the terrifying surprise of poison-gas; the gas was followed by artillery attacks of a ferocity hitherto unequalled; Ypres had been wiped out in a few hours; the Germans had crossed the Yser. Thus the French and English lines, which were joined, had been abruptly pushed back over a long front. That these were anxious hours for the Allies, Sir John French's report of June 15, 1915, indicates very plainly, I think. But they were far from being idle hours. To-day the whole back country, which for weeks had swarmed with soldiers, was up. For miles around, Allied reserves had been called up from camp or billet; and now they were rushing forward to stiffen the wavering lines and stem the threatening thrust for the coast.

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At three o'clock on this afternoon, I stood in the rue d'Ypres, before the railway station in Poperinghe, and watched the new army of England go up. Thousands and thousands, foot and horse, supply and artillery, gun, caisson, wagon, and lorry, the English were going up. All afternoon long, in an unending stream, they tramped and rolled up the Flemish highroad, and wheeling just before me, dipped and disappeared down a side street toward "out there." Beautifully equipped and physically attractive — the useless cavalry especially! — sun-tanned and confident, all ready, I am sure, to die without a whimper, they were a most likely and impressive-looking lot. And I suppose that they could have had little more idea of what they were going into than you and I have of the geography of the nether regions.

This was on my left — the English going up. And on my right, the two streams actually touching and mingling, the English were coming back. They did not come as they went, however. They came on their backs, very still and remote; and all that you were likely to see of them now was their muddy boots at the ambulance flap.

*Service Sanitaire* as we were, I think Section One never saw, before or since, such a conglomeration of wounded as we saw that day at Poperinghe. Here was the railhead and the base; here for the moment were the Red Cross and Royal Army Medical Corps units shelled out of Ypres; here was the nervous centre of all that swarming and sweating back-of-the-front. And here, hour after hour, into and through the night, the slow-moving wagons, English, French, and American, rolling on one another's heels, brought back the bloody harvest.

The English, so returning to Poperinghe *gare*, were very well cared for. By the station wicket a large squad of English stretcher-bearers, directed, I believe, by a colonel of the line, was unceasingly and expertly busy. Behind the wicket lay the waiting English train, steam up for Boulogne, enormously long and perfectly sumptuous; a super-train, a hospital Pullman, all swinging white beds

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and shining nickel. The French, alas, were less lucky that day. Doubtless the unimagined flood of wounded had swamped the generally excellent service; for the moment, at least, there was not only no super-train for the French, there was no train. As for the bunks of the station warehouses, the *hôpital d'évacuation*, they were, of course, long since exhausted. Thus it was that wounded *tirailleurs* and Zouaves and black men from Africa set down from ambulances, staggered unattended up the station platform, sat and lay anyhow about the concrete and the sand — no flesh-wounded hoppers these, but hard-punished men, not a few of them struck, it was only too manifest, in the seat of their lives. This was a bloody disarray which I never saw elsewhere, and hope never to see again. Here, indeed, there was moaning to be heard, with the hard gasp and hopeless coughing of the *asphyxiés*. And still, behind this heavy ambulance, rolled another and another and another.

On my left was the cannon fodder going up; on my right was the cannon fodder coming back. The whole mechanics of war at a stroke, you might have said; these two streams being really one, these men the same men, only at slightly different stages of their experience. But there was still another detail in the picture we saw that day, more human than the organized machine, perhaps, and it seemed even more pathetic.

### THE FLOTSAM OF WAR

BEHIND me as I stood and watched the mingling stream of soldiers, the little square was black with *réfugiés*. Farther back, in the station yard, a second long train stood steaming beside the hospital train, a train for the homeless and the waifs of war. And presently the gate opened, and these crowds, old men and women and children, pushed through to embark on their unknown voyage.

These were persons who but yesterday possessed a local habitation and a name, a background, old ties and associations, community organization, a life. Abruptly

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severed from all this, violently hacked off at the roots, they were to-day floating units in a nameless class, droves of a ticket and number, *réfugiés*. I walked up the platform beside their crowded train. A little group still lingered outside — a boy, a weazened old man, and three or four black-clad women, simple peasants, with their household goods in a tablecloth — waiting there, it may be, for the sight of a familiar face, missed since last night. I asked the women where they came from. They said from Boesinghe, which the Germans had all but entered the night before. Their homes, then, were in Boesinghe? Oh, no; their homes, their real homes, were in a little village some twenty kilometres back. And then they fixed themselves permanently in my memory by saying, quite simply, that they had been driven from their homes by the coming of the Germans in October, 1914; and they had then come to settle with relatives in Boesinghe, which had seemed safe — until last night. Twice expelled and severed at the roots — where were they going now? I asked the question, and one of the women made a little gesture with her arms, and answered stoically, "To France," which was, as I consider, the brave way of saying, God knows. As the case seemed sad to me, I tried to say something to that effect; and, getting no answer to my commonplaces, I glanced up, and all the women's eyes had suddenly filled with tears.

And outside the English were still going up with a fine tramp and rumble, nice young clerks from Manchester and greengrocers' assistants from Tottenham Court Road.

I have never forgotten that the very last soldier I carried in my ambulance (on June 23, 1915) was one whose throat, while he slept, had been quietly cut by a flying sliver of a shell thrown from a gun twenty-two miles away. But it will not do, I am aware, to over-emphasize the purely mechanical side of modern war, the deadly impersonality which often seems to characterize it, the

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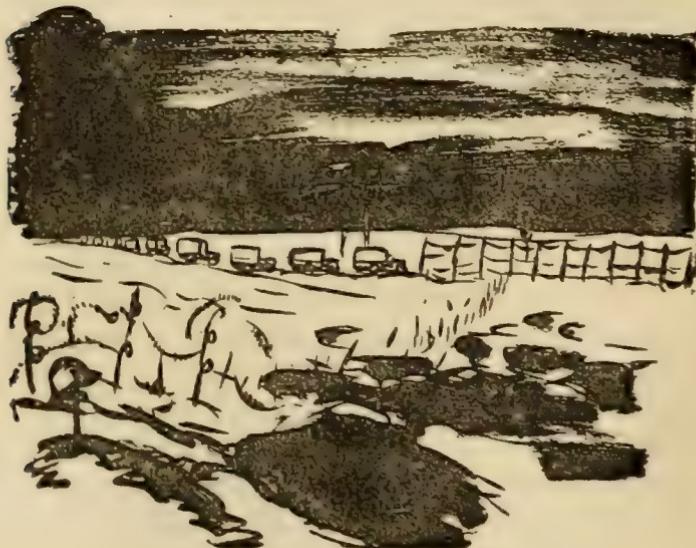
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terrible meaninglessness of its deaths at times. Ours, as I have said, was too much the hospital view. That the personal equation survives everywhere, and the personal dedication, it is quite superfluous to say. Individual exaltation, fear and the victory over fear, conscious consecration to an idea and ideal, all the subtle promptings and stark behavior by which the common man chooses and avows that there are ways of dying which transcend all life, — this, we know, must have been the experience of hundreds of thousands of the young soldiers of France. And all this, beyond doubt, will one day be duly recorded, in tales to stir the blood and set the heart afire.

HENRY SYDNOR HARRISON<sup>1</sup>

June, 1916

<sup>1</sup> The novelist; Columbia, '00; a member of the Field Service from March to July, 1915.



## II

### THE YEAR IN FLANDERS

OLD SECTION ONE had at least one distinguishing characteristic. It was the first section of substantial proportions to be geographically separated from the American Ambulance at Neuilly and turned over to the French Army. Until it left for the front, American automobiles had worked either to and from Neuilly Hospital, as an evacuating base, or, if temporarily detached for service elsewhere, they had gone out in small units.

The Section's story began in the cold, wet days of early January, 1915, when twenty men with twelve cars left Paris for the north. *En route* we spent our first night in the shadow of the Beauvais cathedral, passing the following day through many towns filled with French troops, and then, as we crossed into the British sector, traversed villages abounding with the khaki-clad soldiers of England and her colonies and the turbaned troops of British India. The second night we stayed at Saint-Omer, the men sleeping in their cars in the centre of the town square; and the third morning, passing out of the British sector once more into the French lines, we arrived in Dunkirk where our work began.

We were at once assigned to duty. Every school, barrack and other large building — even the public theatre — in the town, or in the neighboring towns within ten miles of Dunkirk, seemed to have been turned into a hospital. The cars were parked in the railroad yard near the station where a big freight shed was fitted up as receiving-post. The drivers on active duty were quartered in a small lean-to in the station yard, which lean-to was furnished with straw-covered bunks, a table, and a stove. It was the principal loafing-place for the young Americans, and being an ill-smelling place, soon acquired the name of

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"Monkey House." The men secured their meals in a nearby cafe, remembered chiefly for its dirty, dingy interior.

The *blessés* arriving at Dunkirk by hospital trains from Belgian villages, a few miles away, were unloaded in this freight-shed and then carried to the twenty-five or more hospitals in the city and in the towns roundabout.

Our first incident of an exciting nature came on the second day. We were nearly all at the station, quietly waiting for the next train, when high up in the air there appeared first one, then three, and finally seven graceful aeroplanes. We watched, fascinated, and were the more so when a moment later we learned that they were Taubes. It seemed hard to realize that we were to witness one of the famous raids that have made Dunkirk even more famous than the raider Jean Bart himself had ever done. Explosions were heard on all sides and the sky was soon spotted with puffs of white smoke from the shells fired at the intruders. The rattle of the *mitrailleuses* and the bang of the "75's" became a background of sound for the more solemn boom of the shells. A few moments later there was a bang not thirty yards away and we were showered with bits of stone. We stood spellbound until the danger was over and then foolishly jumped behind our cars for protection.

### WHEN BOMBING WAS YOUNG

THIS incident of our early days was soon thrown into unimportance by other raids, each more interesting than the last. One of them stands out in memory above all the rest. It occurred on a perfect moonlight night, quite cloudless. Four of my companions and I were on night duty in the railway yard; about eleven the excitement started; and to say that it commenced with a bang is not slang but the truth. Rather it commenced with many bangs. The sight was superb and the excitement intense. One could hear the whirr of the motors, and when they presented a certain angle to the moon, the machines showed up like enormous silver flies. One had a delicious feeling



DUNKIRK, 1915. EFFECT OF ONE SHELL FROM THIRTY MILES AWAY



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of danger, and to stand there and hear the roar of the artillery, the buzzing of the aeroplanes, the swish of the bombs as they fell and the crash as they exploded made an unforgettable experience. One could plainly hear the bombs during their flight, for each had a propeller attached which prevented its too rapid descent, thus insuring its not entering so far into the ground as to explode harmlessly. To hear them coming and to wonder if it would be your turn to be hit next was an experience new to us all. The bombardment continued for perhaps an hour and then our work began. I was sent down to the quay and brought back two wounded men and one who had been killed, and all my companions had about the same experience. One took a man from a half-demolished house; another, an old woman who had been killed in her bed; and still another three men, badly mutilated, who had been peacefully walking along the street. An hour later all was quiet — except perhaps the nerves of some of our men.

About this time our work was enlivened by the appearance of the one and only real ambulance war dog, the official mascot of the squad, and my personal dog at that! I was very jealous on that point and rarely let him ride on another machine. I got him at Zuydcoote. I found him playing about, and as he appeared to be astray and was very friendly, I allowed him to get on the seat and stay there. But I had to answer so many questions about him that it became a bore, and finally I prepared a speech to suit all occasions; so when any one approached me and took up the dog question, I used to say, "*Non, Madame, il n'est pas américain, il est français. Je l'ai trouvé ici dans le Nord.*" One day a rosy-cheeked young lady came up and called the dog "Dickie"; whereupon I started my speech: "*Il ne s'appelle pas Dickie, Mademoiselle, mais Khaki, et, vous savez, il est français.*" "*Je le sais bien, Monsieur, parce qu'il est à moi.*" I felt sorry and chagrined, but not for long, as a moment later the lady presented him to me.

## THE DRIVE FOR CALAIS

WE will skip over the humdrum life of the next weeks to a night in April when we were suddenly ordered to the station at about 1 A.M. It was, I think, April 22. "The Germans have crossed the Yser" was the news that sent a thrill through all of us. Would they this time reach Calais or would they be pushed back? We had no time to linger and wonder. All night long we worked unloading the trains that followed each other without pause. The Germans had used a new and infernal method of warfare; they had released a cloud of poisonous gas which, with a favorable wind, had drifted down and completely enveloped the Allied trenches. The tales of this first gas attack were varied and fantastic, but all agreed on the surprise and horror of it. Trains rolled in filled with huddled figures, some dying, some more lightly touched, but even these coughed so that they were unable to speak coherently. All told the same story, of having become suddenly aware of a strange odor, and then of smothering and choking and falling like flies. In the midst of all this had come a hail of shrapnel. The men were broken as I have never seen men broken. In the months of our work we had become so accustomed to dreadful sights and to suffering as to be little affected by them. The sides and floors of our cars had often been bathed in blood and our ears had not infrequently been stirred by the groans of men in agony, but these sufferers from the new form of attack awakened in all of us feelings of pity beyond any that we had ever felt before. To see these big men bent double, convulsed and choking was heart-breaking and hate-inspiring.

At ten o'clock we were ordered to Poperinghe, about twenty miles from Dunkirk and three miles from Ypres, where a great battle was just getting under way. The town was filled with refugees from Ypres, which was in flames and uninhabitable. Through Poperinghe and beyond it we slowly wound our way in the midst of a solid

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stream of motor trucks filled with dust-covered soldiers coming up to take their heroic part in stemming the German tide. We were to make our headquarters for the time at Elverdinghe; but as we approached our destination the road was being shelled and we put on our best speed to get through the danger zone. This destination turned out to be a small château in Elverdinghe, where a first-aid hospital had been established, and where, all around us, batteries of French and English guns were thundering their aid to the men in the trenches some two miles away. In front of us and beside us were the famous "75's," and "120's," and farther back the great English marine guns, whose big shells we could hear every few seconds passing over us.

Before we reached the château, an automobile had just been put out of commission by a shell; so we had to change our route and go up another road. The château presented a terrible scene. In every room straw and beds and stretchers, with mangled men everywhere. We started to work and for twenty-six hours there was scarcely time for pause. Our labor consisted in going down to the *postes de secours*, situated in the Flemish farmhouses, perhaps four hundred or five hundred yards from the trenches, where the wounded get their first-aid attention, and then in carrying the men back to the dressing stations where their wounds were more carefully attended to, and finally in taking them farther to the rear to the hospitals outside of shell range. The roads were bad and we had to pass a constant line of convoys. At night no lights were allowed and we had to be especially careful not to jolt our passengers. But the best of drivers cannot help bumping on the pavements of Belgium, and when, during an hour or more, each cobble brings forth a groan from the poor fellows inside, it is hard to bear, especially as they are often out of their heads, when they call for their mothers, order the charge or to cease firing, see visions of beautiful fields or of cool water, and sometimes die before the trip is over.

## ANXIOUS DAYS

THE following morning we decided to stay in Elverdinghe and try to get a little sleep; but no sooner had we turned in than we were awakened by the order to get out of the château at once, as we were under fire. While I was putting on my shoes, the window fell in and part of the ceiling came down. Then we were instructed to evacuate the place of all its wounded and we were kept busy for hours getting them to a place of safety. In the meantime shells were falling all about us. One great tree in front of me was cut completely off and an auto near it was riddled with the fragments. For two weeks this battle lasted, and we watched our little village gradually disintegrating under the German shells. Our cars were many times more or less under heavy artillery and rifle fire and few of them escaped without shrapnel holes.

To most of the *postes* we could go only after dark, as they were in sight of the German lines. Once we did go during the day to a *poste* along the banks of the Yser Canal; but it was too dangerous and the General ordered such trips stopped. These few trips were splendid, however, for to see the men in the trenches and hear the screech of the shells at the very front was thrilling indeed. At times a rifle bullet would find its way over the bank and flatten itself against a near-by farmhouse. One was safer at night, of course, but the roads were so full of marmite holes and fallen trees that they were hard to drive along. We could find our way only by carefully avoiding the dark spots on the road. There was not a man among us, however, who did not feel a hundred times repaid for the danger and anxiety he had gone through when he realized the delay and suffering he had saved the wounded. Had we not been there with our little cars, the wounded would have been brought back on hand-stretchers or in wagons far less comfortable and much slower.

The advantage of our little cars over the bigger and

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heavier ambulances was demonstrated many times. On narrow roads, with a ditch on each side, choked with troops, ammunition wagons, and vehicles of all sorts moving in both directions, horses sometimes rearing in terror at exploding shells, at night in the pitch dark, except for the weird light from the illuminating rockets, the little cars would squeeze through somehow. If sometimes a wheel or two would fall into a shell hole, four or five willing soldiers were enough to lift the car out and send it on its way undamaged. If a serious collision occurred, two hours' work sufficed to repair it. Always "on the job," always efficient, the little car, the subject of a thousand jokes, gained the admiration of every one.

### THE GREAT BOMBARDMENT OF DUNKIRK

FINALLY the second battle of the Yser was over, and the front settled down again to the comparative quiet of trench warfare. Meanwhile some of us were beginning to feel the strain and were ordered back to Dunkirk for a rest, which we reached in time to witness one of the most exciting episodes of the war. It was just at this time that the Germans "sprang" another surprise, — the bombardment of Dunkirk from guns more than twenty miles away. Shells that would obliterate a whole house or make a hole in the ground thirty feet across would fall and explode without even a warning whistle such as ordinary shells make when approaching. At about 9.30 in the morning we were in the railway station working on our cars when, out of a clear, beautiful sky, the first shell fell. We thought it was from an aeroplane, as Dunkirk seemed far from the range of other guns. The dog seemed to know better, for he jumped off the seat of my car and came whining under me. A few minutes later came a second and then a third shell. Still not knowing from where they came, we got out our machines and went to where the clouds of smoke gave evidence that they had fallen. I had supposed that by this time I had become something of a veteran; but when I went into the first dismantled house and saw

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what it looked like inside, the street seemed to me by far a safer place, for the building was one mass of torn timbers, earth and *débris*. Even people in the cellar had been wounded.

We worked all that day, moving from place to place in the town, sometimes almost smothered by dust and plaster from the explosion of shells in our vicinity. We cruised slowly around the streets waiting for the shells to come and then went to see if any one had been hit. Sometimes when houses were demolished, we found every one safe in the cellars, but there were many hurt, of course, and quite a number of killed. The first day I carried three dead and ten terribly wounded soldiers, civilians, and women too. In one of the earliest bombardments a shell fell in the midst of a funeral, destroying almost every vestige of the hearse and body and all of the mourners. Another day one of them hit a group of children at play in front of the billet where at one time we lodged, and one never knew how many children had been killed, so complete was their annihilation.

For a time every one believed the shells had been fired from marine guns at sea, but later it was found that they came from heavy land guns, twenty or more miles away; and as these bombardments were repeated in succeeding weeks, measures were taken to safeguard the public from them. Although the shells weighed nearly a ton, their passage through the air took almost a minute and a half, and their arrival in later days was announced by telephone from the French trenches as soon as the explosion on their departure had been heard. At Dunkirk a siren was blown on the summit of a central tower, giving people at least a minute in which to seek shelter in their cellars before the shell arrived. Whenever we heard the siren, our duty was to run into the city and search for the injured, and during the succeeding weeks many severely wounded were carried in our ambulances, including women and children, so frequently the victims of German methods of warfare. The American Ambulance

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cars were the only cars on duty during these different bombardments and the leader of the Section was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* for the services which they performed.

### QUIETER TIMES

IN the summer a quieter period set in. Sunny weather made life agreeable and in their greater leisure our men were able to enjoy sea-bathing and walks along the sand dunes. We kept up a regular ambulance service in Dunkirk and the surrounding towns, but part of the Section was moved to Coxyde, a small village in the midst of the dunes near the sea, between the ruined city of Nieuport and La Panne, the residence of the Belgian King and Queen, where we worked for seven weeks, among the Zouaves and the *Fusiliers Marins*, famous the world over as the "heroes of the Yser."

Then once more we were moved to the district farther south known as Old Flanders, where our headquarters were in a Flemish farm adjacent to the town of Crombeke. The landscape thereabout is flat as a billiard-table, only a slight rise now and again breaking the view. Our work consisted in bringing back wounded from the vicinity of the Yser Canal, which then marked the line of the enemy trenches; but owing to the flatness of the country we had to work chiefly at night. Canals dotted with slow-moving barges were everywhere, and as our work was often a cross-country affair, looking for bridges added to the length of our runs. Here we stayed from August to the middle of December, 1915, during which we did the ambulance work for the entire French front between the English and the Belgian sectors.

### WINTER — AND A MOVE

JUST as another winter was setting in and we were once more beginning to get hordes of cases of frozen feet, we were ordered to move again, this time to another sector. The day before we left, Colonel Morier visited the Sec-

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tion and, in the name of the Army, thanked the men in glowing terms, not only for the work which they had done, but for the way in which they had done it. He recalled the great days of the second battle of the Yser and the Dunkirk bombardments and our part therein; how he had always felt sure that he could depend upon our men and how they had always been ready for any service however arduous or dull or dangerous it might be. He expressed officially and personally his regret at our departure. We left on a day that was typical and reminiscent of hundreds of other days we had spent in Flanders. It was raining when our convoy began to stretch itself out along the road and it drizzled all that day.

JOSHUA G. B. CAMPBELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York; member of Section One from January, 1915, to December, 1916; subsequently first lieutenant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



### III

#### NOTES FROM A DIARY

*Dunkirk, May 16, 1915*

WE started out in four Fords from Paris yesterday and arrived here at about 4 P.M. The journey was one of the most beautiful I have ever taken. The sky was blue, with puffy white clouds, the rolling country a bright green dotted with red and white houses. The villages we passed through were almost deserted except for a few women and children. Once we came across a lot of men working in a field; but they were digging trenches, not ploughing. The children would shout "*Vivent les Anglais!*" as we passed, and once an old woman tossed me a bunch of lilacs.

*Malo-les-Bains, May 20*

WE are billeted, twenty of us, in a tiny villa here, just outside the city and right on the beach. We draw rations from the French Army and a red-haired Flemish girl cooks them for us. Work is rather slack just now. Occasionally a train full of wounded comes in and we take them out to the hospitals in the vicinity. Some German *blessés* arrived yesterday, all that were left of four companies. Poor devils! How melancholy they looked. An officer among them, though shot through the shoulder, was still full of nerve and kept his head up; but the others were too miserable.

There is another squad of us at Poperinghe, near the firing line, and I shall be sent there soon.

*Saturday, May 22*

I WAS "chow orderly" day before yesterday and spent all day setting or clearing the table and flirting with the cook.

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Sunday, May 23

THEY say that the gun is broken down and that is why it does not shoot at us any more. But I doubt it. Took two *couchés* from Hondschoote to Zuydcoote, really a pleasant trip, for the weather, road, and scenery were beautiful. I gave a lift to a bicyclist who had been billeted near the English. It is noticeably more difficult to understand or talk to French soldiers who have had intercourse with the Tommies because these men have acquired the habit of saying only a few words in a sentence in the hope of making the meaning clear. I don't know whether the Tommies can understand such men, but I am sure I cannot. A motor truck I saw the other day was mottled in greens, reds, blues, grays, and browns, so that it looked at a distance like a mass of foliage — camouflage, I suppose.

Monday, May 24

I AM beginning to think that for once news unfavorable to the Germans is true and the big gun is broken. A red, white, and green flag flew from the town hall to-day, for Italy has entered the war. In the morning, at Malo Terminus, I had a hot and bitter dispute with a Turco officer because I insisted that the Ford could not carry eight. They say, though no one seems to know for certain, that an aeroplane dropped a bomb here last night. To-morrow I leave for Poperinghe.

Poperinghe, Tuesday, May 25

STARTED for this place at 10.30 and arrived about 12.30. A warm, dusty road. Roads partly good and partly vile. Most all of the Belgian roads are *pavés*, very much worn from heavy motor convoys and are thick with dust, too, which in wet weather turns to deep mud. Our billet, which I had some trouble in finding, is an old Flemish farmhouse. The rooms are low-studded and have beamed ceilings. The cooking is done over an open fire. All this is picturesque, but most of the men prefer to sleep in



"FLANDERS - AND IT DRIZZLED ALL THAT DAY"



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their cars rather than in the house. Day and night one hears continual cannonading.

*Thursday, May 27*

VERY raw and windy. Sky overcast. I regret that I considered overcoats too expensive in Paris. I think I will make one out of a blanket. We went up to Woesten about 7.30 P.M. I closed up my ambulance as tightly as possible and lighted a lantern to keep warm, with fair success. An Algerian miner gave us some coffee. About midnight some wounded came in and in the shadowed moonlight I took two to West Vleteren.

### VETERANS OF MONS

*Sunday, May 30*

I AWOKE this morning from a rather chilled sleep to see a long file of khakied soldiers coming up to our farm. They were the 2d Durham Regulars, being sent to the upper end of the British sector after a few days' rest. Some of them had been fighting since September, with no furlough. This is the type of soldier that has built the empire — tough, coarse, rather stupid, well-drilled, and with beautifully kept rifles. They did not look bloodthirsty and most of them were married. But they had become used to killing people and being killed, as a trade, and their point of view seemed rather strange when the enemy was concerned. However, we became very good friends. They were all lamenting the fact that most of their officers had been transferred to the newer regiments and they had been given amateurs. One of their lieutenants seemed no more than sixteen or seventeen. Several of the men confirmed the report in the papers of the Prussians deliberately firing upon the Saxons when the latter tried to surrender. There is no great love between them. They say that frequently the Saxons would shout over to them to save their ammunition for the Prussians and there would occasionally be an exchange of tobacco and canned stuff between the trenches. The French, on the other hand, hate the Saxons. It's a strange war.

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Monday, May 31

THE Durhams left about 5 o'clock. One poor fellow who was on sentry duty last night, found our wine barrel too attractive and had to be taken away under guard. The next time there is a dangerous but unimportant job to be done he will be given it and will probably get shot. After they had gone, I found and appropriated a raincoat which one of them had left. They also left some bully beef and biscuits which were confiscated by the ambulance. In the evening we saw a Zeppelin flying over the Belgian lines. It was fired at but not hit. Another was seen at Dunkirk about the same time — probably both bound for London.

Tuesday, June 1

I WOKE from a deep sleep about noon, to find the farm once more full of soldiers — this time the Buffs. They did not, however, swarm all over it as the Durhams did. They lay down in a neat column in the shelter of the hedge and stayed there. But one or two non-coms came over to talk to us and make us some very welcome presents of Bovril and marmalade. One told us of finding in the field a wounded German he had known in London, who begged to be put out of pain. But the Britisher refused to do this, and the poor fellow died a few minutes later on an English stretcher.

Wednesday, June 2

THE Buffs left in the afternoon. They were not so sociable as the Durhams, but neater and better drilled.

### EASY TIMES

Friday, June 4

THE irrepressible Budd seeing an old gentleman squinting at an aeroplane through a very long telescope, suddenly cried: "*Ne tirez pas, c'est un français!*" The old man was very indignant.

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Saturday, June 5

I WAS "chow" to-day. Except that one has to get up early, the job is a "cinch." The loaf was welcome. About 6.15 there was a very heavy call and I deserted my duties and took five *assis* to Zuydcoote.

Monday, June 7

WARM, hazy day. The scarlet poppies are suddenly out and the fields are gay with them. At midnight, one trip to Rosendaël. As I was about to leave, the pleasant old janitor ran into the garden and came back with a little bunch of white wild carnations growing there in the starlight. At 5.30 in the morning there was a false alarm for all the cars to go to Zuydcoote. Stebbins and Ferguson answered it; but we found there were only six *blessés* to be carried.

Poperinghe, June 11

THERE is a pretty little light-haired girl here about fourteen years old, who can run like a deer, even in sabots. She runs races with Johnson and Budd and beats them! She does most of our work, and is very pleasant and intelligent and understands a little English as well as French and Flemish. I think she is a little higher class than the rest, and is, of course, a refugee.

Saturday, June 12

In the morning Haney got a trip to Ypres. He reports that there is not a single undamaged house in the city.

Sunday, June 13

In the afternoon, just after lunch, two joy-riding doctors strolled over to the billet and asked for some one to take them to Nieuport and Ypres. I took them. The doctors were very much afraid of being seen by some one from the hospital, so they hid inside the car until we were out of Poperinghe. We went through Saint-Sixte, Oostvleteren, Furnes, to Coxyde, one of our new *postes*; and then up

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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the coast to Nieuport. The vicinity of the Yser was flooded. As we came near the city, the road and fields were frequently dotted with *marmite* holes. Occasionally wretched farmhouses would also be seen, and when we reached the city itself we found it a ruin. There is scarcely a block that does not contain several ruined houses, and in the middle of the town every building is wrecked. Sometimes only the front door and the windows of a house are broken in; sometimes a corner or a side is taken off, giving a sort of diagrammatic view of all the floors; sometimes nothing is left but a pile of plaster and bricks. Leaving the city we drove along the east bank of a canal to Ypres, which was even more of a ruin than Nieuport. It seems as if not a house were untouched. We entered a rather small church — Saint Pierre, I think, was its name. We moved cautiously for the roof had been blown in. The two doctors proceeded to help themselves to the carvings over some confessional booths, while I rummaged around with the best of them and found a pewter collection plate, an old Dutch prayer-book and some little waxen images. The whole proceeding seemed to me a trifle unscrupulous. But after all we were only robbing the next looter and the value of the pilfered articles was almost purely intrinsic. We got back to Poperinghe about half-past six. The doctors were much alarmed because they were seen by two of the men from the hospital out walking in the town. They made me drive up a back road and sneaked home on foot.

### COXYDE — THE DUNES OF THE BELGIAN COAST

Coxyde, Tuesday, June 15

THIS morning about 10, twelve of us started for this place where we arrived in perfect convoy without accident. Like Malo, it is on the shore; many dunes and much wind-driven sand. We are billeted in a hay-loft, from which we have removed the hay, and we eat at a house near by. The place is full of marines, territorials and zouaves — a cheerful bunch. We have all the *poste de secours* work

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around Nieuport — shifts — also one car at Oost-Dunkerke. Our meals are excellent. The two chief outs about the place are that it is obtrusively sandy and is infested with dirty, prying children, who shout the ugliest Flemish in shrill harsh French voices — an ineffable nuisance.

*Friday, June 18*

WENT down to Adinkerke about 8.30, where I met two young Belgian chauffeurs one of whom spoke English. They were very cordial and pleasant. A lot of Belgian soldiers were there and I had my first opportunity to see them near to. One is struck by their youthfulness, as compared with the French and English, due partly to their being blond and clean-shaven. Some of the cavalry have a most brilliant uniform; the breeches are magenta with a yellow stripe. I must get a pair. The Belgians are all very grateful to America, but are afraid that if we go into the war, their countrymen under German rule will starve.

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## IV

### IN ACTION — THE AISNE

As you come along the Compiègne—Soissons road, proceeding in the direction of Soissons, about midway between the two cities you sight a small cluster of gray stone buildings. It is the village of Jaulzy. Here it was we had cast anchor. Before reaching the village you will have noticed a dark round spot in the walls. As you approach, this resolves itself into an arch. Passing through you will find yourself in a muddy stable-yard. I say "muddy" advisedly, for I firmly believe that whatever the season or whatever the weather conditions are, or may have been, you will find that courtyard muddy. Whether the mud is fed from perennial springs or gathers its moisture from the ambient atmosphere, I do not know. The fact remains, that courtyard was, is, and always will be, muddy. Facing the arch on the farther side of the yard, stands a single-storied building of one room. Its inside dimensions are, perhaps, fifty by twenty-five feet. Access is had by a single door and three windows admit a dim light. We found it simply furnished with a wire-bottomed trough, raised about three and a half feet above the floor and extending about double that from the walls on three sides of the room. This left free floor space enough to accommodate a table of planks stretched across *essence* boxes, flanked on either side by two benches belonging to the same school of design. Such was our cantonment. In the trough twenty of us slept, side by side. At the table we messed, wrote, mended tires, played chess, or lanced boils. Two of the windows lacked glass, so there was plenty of cold air; a condition which a small stove did its inefficient best to combat. The galley was established in a tiny hut on the left of the yard and from here the food was transported to the mess by the two unfortunates

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who happened to be on "chow" duty. Since the court-yard was not sufficiently large to accommodate all the cars, half were placed in another yard about two hundred metres down the road, where also was established the *atelier*. At night a sentry was posted on the road between these two points and "*le mot*" was a condition precedent to passing, a circumstance which sometimes gave rise to embarrassment when the password was forgotten.

### AT JAULZY

THE village of Jaulzy is made up of some twoscore forbidding-looking houses. It is situated on the south bank of the Aisne and is bisected by the road from Compiègne to Soissons. At this time, February, 1916, it was, as the shell travels, about four kilometres from the line. Though thus within easy reach of the enemy's field artillery, it showed no signs of having been bombarded, and during our entire stay only five or six shells were thrown in. This immunity was probably due to the insignificant size of the place and the fact that no troops were ever quartered there. Back of the village proper, on the top of a steep hill, was Haut Jaulzy, or Upper Jaulzy. Here a large percentage of the houses was partially demolished — from shell-fire, one of the few remaining inhabitants informed me. Halfway up the hill, between Upper and Lower Jaulzy, stands an ancient stone church. A line of reserve trenches, crossing the hill, traverses the churchyard. Here are buried a number of soldiers, "*mort pour la patrie*." Above one grave is a wooden cross upon which appears the inscription: "To an unknown English soldier; he died for his father's land." And this grave is even better kept and provided with flowers than the others.

### PIERREFONDS — "VEAL CUTLETS"

THE region roundabout Jaulzy is surely among the most beautiful in all France. Hills, plateaus, and wooded valleys, through which flow small, clear streams, all combine to lend it natural charm, a charm of which even winter

cannot rob it. Numerous villages are everywhere scattered about, and while those near the front had a war-worn aspect, in proportion to their distance from the line their freshness and attractiveness increased. Railhead for this sector was Pierrefonds, a pleasant town overshadowed by the fairylike castle from which it takes its name. It was at Pierrefonds we obtained our supply of *essence* and *huile*. Off to the southwest, in a magnificent forest bearing the same name, is the quaint little city of Villers-Cotterets — by the Squad rechristened "Veal Cutlets." It was here Dumas was born and lived. The city owed its chief interest to us, however, to the fact that here was located one of the field hospitals to which we transported wounded. Some twenty kilometres to the west of Jaulzy is the old city of Compiègne, reminiscent of Robert Louis Stevenson, and here too were located evacuation hospitals. Its curious town hall, its venerable houses, and dark, mysterious shops are interesting, but our most lasting memories of the city will be of its silent, wind-swept streets through which we carried our wounded on those dark, icy nights.

The day began at 6.30 A.M. when the detested alarm clock went into action, supplemented by shouts of "everybody out" and sleepy groans of protest. A quick shift from flea-bag to knickers and tunic, and a promissory toilet was accomplished by 7, by which time, also, the two orderlies for the day had set the table with coffee, bread, and jam. This disposed of, the cars were cranked — and a bone-wrenching job this usually was, the motors being so stiff from the cold it was next to impossible to "turn them over." There was a Squad rule for "lights out" at 9.30 P.M., but as there were always some individuals who wished to write or play chess or read after this hour, excellent target practice was nightly furnished to those who had retired in the trough and who objected to the continued illumination. Thus I have seen a well-directed boot wipe out an intricate chess match as completely as did the German guns the forts of Liège. The

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"gunner" in these fusillades always endeavored to see that the ammunition employed — usually boots — was the property of some one else and the joy which a "direct hit" engendered was apt to suffer abatement on discovery that they were your boots which had been employed.

### EVACUATION — VIC-SUR-AISNE AND COMPIÈGNE

THE schedule under which the Squad operated while on the Aisne was a varied one, and yet so systematized that a driver could tell a fortnight in advance, by the list of sailings posted on the order board, where he should be and what his duties at any given day or hour. There were three regular-route runs, to each of which were assigned two cars a day. These were known as "evacuation runs" from the fact that the *blessés* were picked up at regularly established field dressing-stations, from two and a half to fifteen kilometres back of the line, and transported to an "evacuation hospital," either at Villers-Cotterets, Compiègne, or Pierrefonds. The longer of these routes was made twice each day, a run of about forty kilometres.

About two kilometres to the east of Jaulzy, on the north side of the river, is the village of Vic-sur-Aisne, at this time not much above a kilometre back of the line. Here was established our picket post and here we maintained always three cars, serving in twenty-four-hour shifts. From this station we served nine frontal *postes de secours*, or line dressing-stations, some of which were within five hundred metres of the German line. Such were the *postes* of Hautebraye and Vingre. The crossing of the Aisne to reach Vic is made by a single-spanned iron bridge, over which passed all the transport for this portion of the line. Because of the importance thus given it, the bridge was a continual object of the enemy's fire, being within easy range. The village itself, considering the fact that it was within sight of the Germans and had been under more or less continuous fire for months, was not so complete a wreck as might be imagined. This was due to the fact that the buildings were of stone and the shelling was

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usually done with small-calibre guns. To obstruct the enemy's view and prevent his spotting passing traffic, the roads leading from the village were screened with brush and poles. These served their purpose in winter when the roads were muddy, but when the roads dried, the rising dust betrayed the passing of the transport and then the enemy was able to shell with a greater degree of accuracy. Our station at Vic was located in the carriage-house of a château which stood on an eminence overlooking the river, about a quarter of a mile to the east of the village. When on duty there, we messed with some *sous-officiers* in the cellar of the château, the place being fairly safe from shell éclats though not from a direct hit.

Besides the three route runs described and the Vic service, the Squad was subject to special calls at any time of the day or night from any part of our sector or the surrounding country. This service was known as "*bureau* duty," from the fact that the cars assigned to it were stationed at our office or *bureau*, which was in telephonic communication with the line and region about. Twice a week one of the cars on bureau service was despatched to Compiègne on "chow" foraging, an assignment much coveted, since it meant a chance for a hot bath and a good feed.

Under this schedule a driver had one day in every seven for *repos*. This was more in theory than actuality, however, as the seventh day usually found work needed on his car.

We had reached Jaulzy on the 27th of January. On the first day of February we took over the sector from the retiring French Ambulance Section, and that day went into action. Heretofore we had watched the passing panorama of war; now we were of it. My first voyage was an evacuation route and hence wholly back of the line. I went in company with another car, and as there were only four *assis* which the other car took, I had no passengers. Coming back from Cœuvres, the road leads across a plateau which overlooks the Aisne Valley, and the coun-



PANEL FROM THE SIDE OF A SECTION ONE AMBULANCE WITH  
THE ORIGINAL INDIAN HEAD INSIGNIA



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try behind the German lines was plainly visible. It was from this plateau road that for the first time I saw shells bursting. The French batteries in the valley below were in action and over there in Boche-land white puffs of smoke showed where the shells were breaking.

Though I had several times been very close to the line, it was not until February was nine days old that I received my baptism of fire. On that day I was on twenty-four-hour duty at Vic and my journal written just after I came off duty, will, perhaps, give an idea of a typical shift at this station:

### NOTES OF A CALL

"JAULZY, February 10. Relieved the other cars at Vic promptly at eight o'clock yesterday morning. The French batteries were already in action, but there was no response from the enemy till about ten, when a number of shells whistled by overhead, dropping into the village of Roches, about a half mile down the road. Toward noon the range was shortened, and as we went to mess in the dugout an *obus* struck the wall back of the château, a hundred yards away. After lunch I went out with a soldier to look for the *fusée*, as the bronze shell-head is called. To my surprise, the man suddenly dropped flat on his face. Then I heard an awful screech, followed by a crash, as though a pile of lumber were falling, and a cloud of dust rose in a field, perhaps ninety metres away. Almost immediately two more crashed in. I am unable to analyze or describe my sensations and I question whether a trained psychologist would be much better off. There is something "disturbing" about shell-fire which is not conducive to abstract or analytical thought. I do not believe I was especially frightened; my feelings were more of curiosity. I knew this shelling would soon mean work for us, so I got back to my car and saw that everything was ready for 'marching.' Meanwhile a shell had dropped just back of the château, getting one of the stretcher-bearers. Joe carried him to the dressing-station at Roches where he

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died a little later. My first call came at two o'clock, from Roches. Here I got three men, just wounded by shell éclats, evacuating them to the field hospital at Attichy. Got back to Vic about four. Found the village still under fire, both our own and the enemy's fire having, if anything, increased. Both of the other cars were out, which meant I was due for the next call. Got into my sleeping-bag to try to get warm, but was hardly settled before a *Médecin Major* came in announcing a call for Vingre. In five minutes we were on our way. After leaving Vic the road was a sea of mud. An enemy observation balloon had the way in full view, so the word was *vite*.

"Through deserted, shell-shattered villages we ploughed, the mud spraying us from tires to top and filling our eyes, over the wind-break. It was nearing dusk as we reached the *poste*, a dugout in the side of a hill. Just above us, on the crest was the line and we could hear distinctly the popping of hand-grenades between the battery salvos. Our men, one shot through the leg, the other hit in the chest, were brought in from a *boyau* and we started back, this time going more slowly. It was a desolate scene through which we passed, made more desolate by the fading light of a gray day. The miry, deserted road, the stricken villages, the overgrown fields — it seemed the very stamping-ground of death and the voice of that death passed overhead in whining shrieks. There was little of life to dispute its reign. Now and then, at the nozzle of a dugout, there appeared a soldier's head, but that was all, and, for the rest, there might not have been a soul within a thousand miles.

"One of my *blessés* required an immediate operation, so I passed on through Vic and headed for Compiègne, reaching there about seven o'clock and evacuating to St. Luke's Hospital. At once started back to my station. Found the cook had saved me some dinner, and after stowing this crawled into my flea-bag. The blankets were barely around me when a *brancardier* came in with a call for the *poste* at Hautebraye. The moon gave a little light,

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but not enough to drive fast with safety, so we drove fast and let safety look out for itself, our motto being not "safety first," but "save first." We found our man ready, shot through the body, raving with delirium, his hands bound together to prevent him tearing his wound. Though a part of our way was exposed to the enemy's machine-gun-fire, the road was too pitted with shell-holes to permit of fast driving with so badly wounded a man and so we crept back to Vic. The order was again to Compiègne. It was close to midnight when, numbed with cold, we rolled through the silent streets of the town. On my return trip I twice found myself nodding over the wheel. Nevertheless, we made the thirty-two kilometres in less than an hour. Found Vic quiet, the shelling having ceased, and save for an occasional trench-flare, little to indicate it was the front. At one o'clock I turned in on the stone floor, this time to rest undisturbed till morning.

"Roused out at 6.30 to greet a gray winter day and falling snow. The batteries on both sides were already in action and the *put-put-put* of machine guns came to us through the crisp air. The relief cars rolled in at eight and we at once cranked up and set out for quarters. As we crossed the Aisne, the Germans were shelling the bridge, with '150's,' I think. They had the exact range, as regards distance, but the shells were falling about a hundred yards to one side, throwing up great geysers of water as they struck the river. On reaching the other side I stopped and watched them come in. They came four to the minute. Reached quarters here, Jaulzy, at 8.30 — completing the twenty-four-hour shift."

So it was I had my baptism of fire. Perhaps I was not frightened by those first shells; curiosity may have supplanted other sensations, but as time went on, and I saw the awful destructive power of shell-fire, when I had seen buildings levelled and men torn to bloody shreds, the realization of their terribleness became mine, and with it came a terror of that horrible soul-melting shriek. And

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now after a year and a half of war, during which I have been scores of times under fire and have lived for weeks at a time in a daily bombarded city, I am no more reconciled to shell-fire than at first. If anything, the sensation is worse, and personally I do not believe there is such a thing as becoming "used" to it.

### THE SENSATION OF NIGHT DRIVING

IT was early in February that I got my first experience at night driving without lights. To you gentlemen who have shot rapids, great game, and billiards, who have crossed the Painted Desert and the "line," who have punched cows in Arizona and heads in Mile End Road, who have killed moose in New Brunswick and time in Monte Carlo, who have tramped and skied and trekked, to you who have tried these and still crave a sensation, let me recommend night driving without lights over unfamiliar shell-pitted roads, cluttered with traffic, within easy range of the enemy, challenged every now and then by a sentry who has a loaded gun and no compunction in using it. Your car, which in daylight never seems very powerful, has now become a very Juggernaut of force. At the slightest increase of gas it fairly jumps off the road. Throttle down as you may, the speed seems terrific. You find yourself with your head thrust over the wheel, your eyes staring ahead with an intensity which makes them ache — staring ahead into nothing. Now and then the blackness seems, if possible, to become more dense, and you throw out your clutch and on your brake and come to a dead stop, climbing out to find your radiator touching an overturned caisson. Or mayhap a timely gun-flash or the flare of a trench light will show that you are headed off the road and straight for a tree. A little farther on, the way leads up a hill — the pulling of the engine is the only thing that tells you this — and then, just as you top the rise, a star-bomb lights the scene with a dense white glare and the *brancardier* by your side rasps out, "*Vite, pour l'amour de Dieu, vite! ils peuvent nous voir!*" — and

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you drop down the other side of that hill like the fall of a gun-hammer. Then, in a narrow, mud-gutted lane in front of a dugout, you back and fill and finally turn; your bloody load is eased in and you creep back the way you have come, save that now every bump and jolt seems to tear your flesh as you think of those poor, stricken chaps in behind. Yes, there is something of tenseness in lightless night driving under such conditions. Try it, gentlemen.

On the afternoon and night of February 12, there was an attack on the line near Vingre, preceded by drum-fire. As such things go, it was but a small affair. It would perhaps have a line in the *communiqué*; as, "North of the Aisne the enemy attempted a *coup* upon a salient of our line, but we repulsed him with loss." That and nothing more. But to those who were there it was very real. The big guns spat their exchange of hate; rifle-fire crackled along the line; the machine guns sewed the air with wicked staccato sounds, and men, with set jaws and bayonets, charged to death through barbed entanglements. As night closed down, the flare-bombs spread their fitful glare on mutilated things which that morning had been living men: now set in the bloody back-wash of wounded. With the coming of the night, the enemy lengthened the range of his artillery, so as to harass the transport, and the zone back of the line was seared with shells. The field dressing-station at Roches, near Vic, suffered greatly, and it soon became apparent that its evacuation was necessary.

I had already been on duty fourteen hours when the call reached quarters for the entire Squad. My journal for the 13th reads: "I'm too tired for much writing as I've had but two hours' sleep in the last forty, during which I have driven close to three hundred kilometres, been three times under fire, and had but two hot meals. The entire Squad was turned out just after I got into the blankets last night. Roches was being bombarded, and it was necessary to take out all the wounded. There were a number of new shell-holes in the road and this made interesting driving. It was 1.30 when I reached Com-

piègne, 3 when I had completed my evacuation, and 4.15 this morning when I reached quarters. Up at 6.30 and working on my 'bus. This afternoon made route 3. Tonight I am *bien fatigué*. Firing light to-day, possibly because of sleet and rain. The attack was evidently repulsed."

The Squad did good work that night. Afterwards we were commended by the Colonel in command. It was in this attack that "Bill" won his *Croix de Guerre* when "*à un endroit particulièrement exposé, au moment où les obus tombaient avec violence, a arrêté sa voiture pour prendre des blessés qu'il a aidé avec courage et sang-froid.*" A week later he was decorated, our muddy little courtyard being the setting for the ceremony.

In celebration of his decoration, "Bill" determined to give a "burst." There would seem to be few places less adapted to the serving of a banquet or less capable of offering material than poor little war-torn Jaulzy. Nevertheless, at six o'clock on the evening of February 27, the Squad sat down to a repast that would have done credit to any hotel. "Bill" had enlisted the services of a Paris caterer, and not only was the food itself perfection, but it was served in a style that, after our accustomed tin cup, tin plate service, positively embarrassed us. Our dingy quarters were decorated and made light by carbide lamps; a snowy cloth covered our plank table; stacks of china dishes — not tin — appeared at each place; there were chairs to sit upon. Even flowers were not forgotten, and "Bill," being a Yale man, had seen to it that beside the plates of the other Yale men in the Squad were placed bunches of violets. The artist of the Section designed a menu card, but we were too busy crashing into the food to pay any attention to the menu. For a month past we had been living mostly on boiled beef and Army bread, and the way the Squad now eased into regular food was an eye-opener to dietitians. Hors d'œuvres, fish, ham, roasts, vegetables, salads, sweets, wines, and smokes disappeared like art in a Hun raid. Twenty men may have

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gotten through a greater quantity and variety of food in three hours and lived, but it is not on record. And through it all the guns snarled and roared unheeded, and the flare-bombs shed their fitful glare. Verily, in after years, when men shall foregather and the talk flows in Epicurean channels, if one there be present who was at "Bill's burst," surely his speech shall prevail.

February, which had come in with mild weather, lost its temper as it advanced; the days became increasingly cold and snow fell. The nights were cruel for driving. One night I remember especially. I had responded to a call just back of the line where I got my *blessé*, a poor chap shot through the lung. It was snowing, the flakes driving down with a vicious force that stung the eyes and brought tears. In spite of the snow it was very black, and to show a light meant to draw fire. We crept along, for fear of running into a ditch or colliding with traffic. At kilometre 8 my engine began to miss. I got out and changed plugs, but this did not help much and we limped along. The opiate given the *blessé* had begun to wear off, and his groans sounded above the whistling of the wind. Once in the darkness I lost the road, going several kilometres out of my way before I realized the error. The engine was getting weaker every minute, but by this time I was out of gun range and able to use a lantern. With the aid of the light, I was able to make some repairs, though my hands were so benumbed I could scarcely hold the tools. The car now "marched" better and I started ahead. Several times a "*qui vive?*" came out of the darkness, to which I ejaculated a startled "*France.*" The snow-veiled clock in Villers-Cotterets showed the hour was half after midnight when we made our way up the choked streets. But "the load" had come through safely.

Uncomfortable as these runs were — and every member of the Squad made them not once, but many times — they were what lent fascination to the work. They made us feel that it was worth while and, however small the way, we were helping.

It was about this time that the Service was militarized and incorporated into the Automobile Corps of the French Army. Thereafter, we were classed as "*Militaires*" and wore on our tunics the red-winged symbol of the Automobile Corps. We were now subject to all the rules and regulations governing regularly enlisted men, with one exception — the duration of our enlistments. We were permitted to enlist for six months' periods with optional three months' extensions, and were not compelled to serve "for duration." As incident to the militarization, we received five sous a day per man — the pay of the French *poilu* — and in addition were entitled to "touch" certain articles, such as shelter tents, *sabots*, tobacco, etc. We had already been furnished with steel helmets and gas-masks. We were also granted the military franchise for our mail.

While at Jaulzy, the personnel of the Squad changed considerably. The terms of several men having expired, they left, their places being taken by new recruits. Thus "Hippo," "Bob," "Brooke," and "Magnum" joined us. Nor must I forget to mention another important addition to our number — the puppy mascot "Vic." He was given to us by a *tirailleur*, who being on the march could not take care of him, and one of the fellows brought him back to quarters in his pocket, a tiny soft, white ball who instantly wriggled himself into the Squad's affections.

When we got him, he could scarcely toddle and was never quite certain where his legs would carry him. Yet even then the button, which he fondly believed a tail, stuck belligerently upright, like a shattered mast from which had been shot the flag. For he, being a child of war, had fear of nothing, no, not gun-fire itself, and as he grew older we took him with us on our runs and he was often under shell-fire. He was always at home, in château or dugout, always sure of himself, and could tell one of our khaki uniforms a mile away, picking us out of a mob of blue-clad soldiers. Such was "Vic," the Squad mascot.

## LEAVING JAULZY

ON the evening of March 3, orders came in to be prepared to move, and the following afternoon, in a clinging, wet snow, we left Jaulzy and proceeded to the village of Courtieux, some three kilometres distant. The village is in the general direction of Vic-sur-Aisne, but back from the main road. For months successive bodies of troops had been quartered here and we found it a squalid, cheerless hole, fetlock deep in mud. Our billet was a small, windowless house, squatting in the mud and through which the wind swept the snow. There was also a shed, with bush sides and roof wherein our mess was established.

Why we had been ordered from Jaulzy to this place but three kilometres away, it would be impossible to say. We were maintaining the same schedule and Courtieux was certainly not so convenient a place from which to operate. We cogitated much on the matter, but reached no conclusion. It was just one of the mysteries of war. The three days succeeding our arrival were uncomfortable ones. The weather continued bad with low temperature. When we were off duty there was nowhere to go, save to bed, and there were no beds. What Courtieux lacked in other things it made up in mud, and our cars were constantly mired. As a relief from the monotony of the village, three of us, being off duty one afternoon, made a peregrination to the front-line trenches, passing through miles of winding, connecting *boyaux* until we lost all sense of direction. We really had no right to go up to the line, but we met with no opposition, all the soldiers we met greeting us with friendly *camaraderie* and the officers responding to our salutes with a *bonjour*. We found the front line disappointingly quiet. There was little or no small-arm firing going on, though both sides were carrying on a desultory shelling. Through a sandbagged loophole we could see a low mud escarpment about ninety metres away — the enemy's line. It was not an exciting view, the chief interest being lent by the fact

that in taking it you were likely to have your eye shot out. All things considered, the excursion was a rather tame affair, though we who had made it did our best to play it up to the rest of the Squad upon our return.

We remained at Courtieux but three days, and then, at nine o'clock on the morning of the 4th, assembled in convoy at Jaulzy. It was one of the coldest mornings of the winter; the trees were masses of ice and the snow creaked beneath the tires, while our feet, hands, and ears suffered severely. As usual, we had no idea of our destination. That our Division had been temporarily withdrawn from the line and that we were to be attached to another Division, was the extent of our information. By the time the convoy had reached Compiègne we were all rather well numbed. When the C.O. halted in the town, he had failed to note a *pâtisserie* was in the vicinity, and the motors had hardly been shut off before the Squad *en masse* stormed the place, consuming *gâteaux* and stuffing more *gâteaux* into its collective pockets. Meanwhile, outside, the "Lieut" blew his starting whistle in vain.

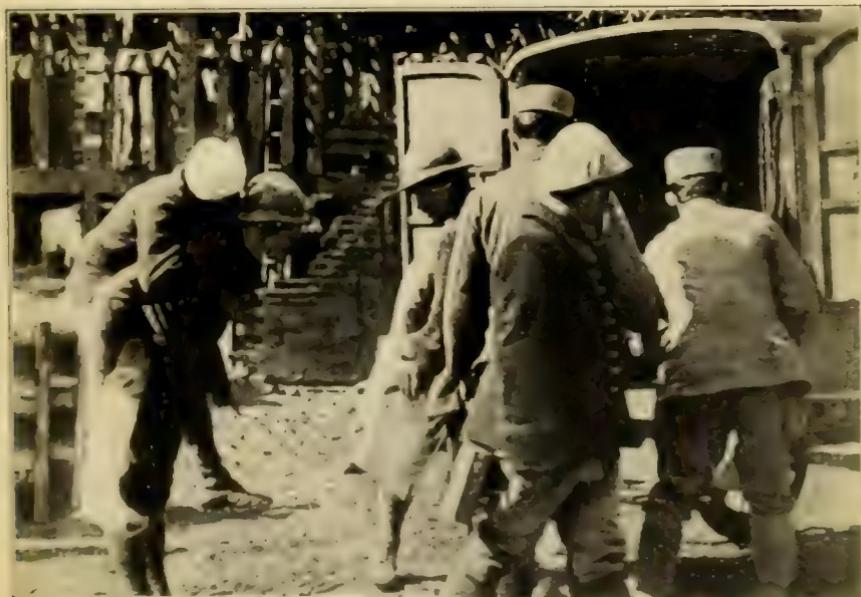
### MONTDIDIER — MOREUIL

SHORTLY before noon we made the city of Montdidier, where we lunched in the hotel and waited for the laggard cars to come up. About three we again got away, passing through a beautiful rolling country, and as darkness was falling parked our cars in the town of Moreuil. It was too late to find a decent billet for the night. A dirty, rat-infested warehouse was all that offered, and after looking this over, most of us decided, in spite of the cold, to sleep in our cars. Our mess was established in the back room of the town's principal café, and the fresh bread, which we obtained from a near-by bakery, made a welcome addition to Army fare. Moreuil proved to be a dull little town, at that time some twenty-five kilometres back of the line. Aside from an aviation field there was little of interest.

On the third day of our stay we were reviewed and inspected by the ranking officer of the sector. He did not



VACHERAUVILLE THAT WAS A CHEERFUL VILLAGE NEAR VERDUN



LENDING A HAND AT A "POSTE"



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appear very enthusiastic, and expressed his doubt as to our ability to perform the work for which we were destined, an aspersion which greatly vexed us. Our vindication came two months later when, having tested us in action, he gave us unstinted praise and spoke of us in the highest terms.

After the review, the C.O. announced that we had received orders to move and would leave the following day for a station on the Somme. He refused to confirm the rumor that our destination was "Moscow."

### THE SOMME

It was 10.50 on a snowy, murky morning — Friday, March 10 — that our convoy came to a stop in the village of Méricourt, destined to be our Headquarters for some months to come. There was little of cheer in the prospect. One street — the road by which we had entered — two abortive side streets — these lined with one- or two-storied peasants' cottages — and everywhere, inches deep, a sticky, clinging mud: such was Méricourt. This entry from my journal fairly expresses our feelings at the time: "In peace times this village must be depressive; now with added grimness of war it is dolorous. A sea of mud, shattered homes, a cesspool in its centre, rats everywhere. This is Méricourt: merry hell would be more expressive and accurate."

Our first impression was not greatly heightened by viewing the quarters assigned to us, and we felt with Joe that "they meant very little in our young lives." Two one-and-a-half-storied peasants' cottages, with débris-littered floor and leaking roof, these rheumatic structures forming one side of a sort of courtyard and commanding a splendid view of a large, well-filled cesspool, constituted our cantonment. It would have taken a Jersey real-estate agent to find good points in the prospect. The optimist who remarked that at least there were no flies was cowed into silence by the rejoinder that the same could be said of the North Pole. However, we set to work, cleaned and

disinfected, constructed a stone causeway across "the campus," and by late afternoon had, to some extent, made the place habitable. A bevy of rats at least seemed to consider the place so, and we never lacked for company of the rodent species.

The twenty of us set up our stretcher-beds in the two tiny rooms and the attic, and were at home. One of the ground-floor rooms — and it had only the ground for a floor — possessed a fireplace, the chimney of which led into the attic above. Here it became tired of being a chimney, resigned its duties, and became a smoke-dispenser. It was natural that the ground-floor dwellers, having a fireplace, should desire fire. It was natural, also, that the dwellers above, being imbued with strong ideas on the subject of choking to death, should object to that fire. Argument ensued. For a time those below prevailed, but the attic dwellers possessed the final word, and when their rebuttal — in the shape of several cartridges — was dropped down the chimney on the fire, those below lost interest in the matter and there prevailed an intense and eager longing for the great outdoors.

We established our mess in what in peace times was a tiny café, in the back room of which an adipose proprietress, one of the few remaining *civiles*, still dispensed *pinard* and hospitality. It was in the same back room one night that a soldier, exhibiting a hand-grenade, accidentally set it off, killing himself, a comrade, and wounding five others, whom we evacuated. Incidentally the explosion scared our zouave cook who at the time was sleeping in an adjoining room. He was more frightened than he had been since the first battle of the Marne.

The front room, which was our mess hall, was just long enough to permit the twenty of us, seated ten to a side, to squeeze about our plank table. The remaining half of the room was devoted to the galley, where the zouave held forth with his pots and pans and reigned supreme. The walls of this room had once been painted a sea-green, but now were faded into a bilious, colicky color. Great

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beads of sweat were always starting out and trickling down as though the house itself were in the throes of a deadly agony.

### MÉRICOURT-SUR-SOMME

MÉRICOURT is situated about a fifth of a mile from the right bank of the river Somme, and at this time was about seven and a half or eight kilometres from the front line. The Somme at this point marked the dividing line between the French and English armies, the French holding to the south, the English to the north. Though within easy range of the enemy's mid-calibre artillery, it was seldom shelled, and I can recall but one or two occasions during our entire stay when shells passed over.

As on the Aisne, we got our wounded from a number of scattered *postes*, some close to the line, others farther back, some located in villages, others in mere dugouts in the side of a hill. Evacuations were usually made to the town of Villers-Bretonneux where were located a number of field hospitals, or to an operating hospital at the village of Cérisy about fifteen kilometres from the line. A regular schedule of calls was maintained to certain *postes*, the cars making rounds twice a day. Such were the *postes* at the villages of Proyart, Chuignes, Chuignolles, and in the dugouts at Baraquette and Fontaine lès Cappy, all some kilometres back of the line, but under intermittent shell-fire. Besides these *postes* there were several others which, because of their close proximity to the enemy and their exposure to machine-gun-fire, could only be made at night. There was Rainecourt, less than half a kilometre from the enemy's position; the Knotted Tree, four hundred metres from the Germans, and actually in the second-line trench, where, in turning, the engine had to be shut off and the car pushed by hand, lest the noise of the motor draw fire. There, too, was the *poste* at the village of Eclusier, a particularly fine run, since it was reached by a narrow, exceedingly rough road which bordered a deep canal and was exposed throughout its length to *mitrailleuse* fire.

Besides this, the road was lined with batteries for which the Boches were continually "searching."

### VILLERS-BRETONNEUX — PROYART

WE went into action on the afternoon of the same day we reached Méricourt. My orders were to go to a point indicated on the map as the Route Nationale, there pick up my *blessés* and evacuate them to the town of Villers-Bretonneux. I was further instructed not to go down this road too far, as I would drive into the enemy's lines. How I was to determine what was "too far" until it was "too late," or how I was to determine the location of the *poste* — a dugout beneath the road — was left to my own solution. With these cheering instructions I set out. I reached the village of Proyart through which my route lay, noted with interest the effect of bombardment, passed on and came to the Route Nationale. Here, as were my instructions, I turned to the left. I was now headed directly toward the line which I knew could not be very far away and which transversed the road ahead. I pushed rather cautiously up two small hills, my interest always increasing as I neared the top and anticipated what sort of greeting might be awaiting me. I was on my third hill and feeling a bit depressed and lonesome, not having seen a person since leaving the sentry at Proyart, when I heard a shout somewhere behind me. Looking back I beheld a soldier wildly semaphoring. It did not take me long to turn the car and slide back down the hill. Reaching the bottom, I drew up by the soldier, who informed me that the crest of the hill was in full view of the enemy and under fire from the machine guns. I felt that the information was timely.

The *poste* proved to be a dugout directly beneath where I had stopped my car. Here I secured a load of wounded and by dusk had safely evacuated them to the hospital at Villers-Bretonneux. Consulting my map at the hospital it became evident that there was a more direct route back to quarters, and I determined on this. As I was by no

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means sure of the location of the line, I drove without lights, and as a result crashed into what proved to be a pile of rocks, but which I had taken to be a pile of snow, the jar almost loosening my teeth-fillings. The car was apparently none the worse for the encounter and I reached quarters without further mishap.

The aftermath of the mishap occurred next day. Driving at a good pace up a grade — fortunately with no wounded on board — I suddenly found the steering-gear would not respond to the wheel. There was half a moment of helpless suspense, then the car shot off the side of the road down a steep incline, hit a boulder, and turned completely upside down. As we went over I managed to kick off the switch, lessening the chance of an explosion. The Quartermaster, who was with me, and I were wholly unable to extricate ourselves, but some soldiers, passing at the time, lifted the car off us and we crawled out none the worse. "Old Number Nine," save for a broken steering rod, the cause of the spill, and a small radiator leak, was as fit as ever, and half an hour later, the rod replaced, was once more rolling.

### CAPPY

OUR picket *poste* was established at the village of Cappy. To reach the village from Méricourt we passed over a stretch of road marked with the warning sign, "This road under shell-fire: convoys or formed bodies of troops will not pass during daylight." Continuing, we crossed the Somme, at this point entering the English line, and proceeded to the village of Bray. Thence the road wandered through a rolling land for a kilometre or so, again crossing the river and a canal at the outskirts of the village.

Cappy lay in a depression behind a rise of ground about a kilometre and a half from the line. In peace times it was doubtless a rather attractive little place of perhaps three hundred people. Now, devastated by days and months of bombardment, and the passing of countless soldiers, deserted by its civil population and invaded

by countless rats, it presented an aspect forlorn beyond imagination. On a gray winter's day, with sleet beating down and deepening the already miry roads, and a dreary wind whistling through the shattered houses, the place cried out with the desolation of war. And when, at night, a full moon shone through the stripped rafters, when the rats scuttled about and when, perhaps, there was no firing and only the muffled pop of a trench-light, the spirit of death itself stalked abroad and the ghosts of the men who had there met their doom haunted its gruesome, cluttered streets. And then, while the silence hung like a pall until it fairly oppressed one, there would come the awful screech, and the noises of hell would break loose. There was no way of telling when the bombardment would come. It might be at high noon or at midnight, at twilight or as the day broke. Nor could the duration be guessed. Sometimes a single shell crashed in; sometimes a single salvo of a battery; or again, the bombardment would continue for an hour or more. It was this uncertainty which gave the place a tense, uncomfortable atmosphere so that even when there was no shelling the quiet was an uncanny quiet which was almost harder to bear than the shelling itself.

In Cappy no one remained aboveground more than was necessary. Nearly every house had its cellar, and these cellars were deepened, roofed with timbers, and piled high with sandbags. A cave so constructed was reasonably bomb-proof from small shells — "77's" — but offered little resistance to anything larger, and I recall several occasions when a shell of larger calibre, making a direct hit, either killed or wounded every occupant of such a shelter. The resident population of the town was limited to a group of *brancardiers*, some grave-diggers, the crews of several goulash batteries, and some doctors and surgeons. I must not forget to mention the sole remaining representative of the civil population. He was an old, old man, so old it seemed the very shells respected his age and war itself deferred to his feebleness. Clad in

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nondescript rags, his tottering footsteps supported by a staff, at any hour of the day or night he could be seen making his uncertain way among what were the ruins of what had once been a prosperous town — his town. With him, also tottering, was always a wizened old dog who seemed the Methuselah of all dogs. Panting along behind his master, his glazed eyes never leaving him, the dog, too, staggered. There, alone in the midst of this crucified town, the twain dwelt, refusing to leave what to them was yet home. And daily as their town crumbled, they crumbled, until at last, one morning, we found the old chap dead, his dog by his side. That day was laid to rest the last citizen of Cappy.

The dressing-station was located in what in peace times was the town hall, or *mairie*, a two-story brick building having a central structure flanked by two small wings. The building was banked with sandbags which, while not rendering it by any means shell-proof, did protect it from shrapnel and *éclats*. The central room was devoted to the wounded, who were brought in from the trenches on little two-wheeled, hand-pushed trucks, each truck supporting one stretcher. A shallow trough was built around the sides of the room and in this, upon straw, the wounded were placed in rows, while awaiting the doctor. In this portion of the building was also located the mortuary where those who died after being brought in were placed preparatory to burial. The bodies were placed two on a stretcher, the head of one resting on the feet of another. It was a ghastly place, this little room, with its silent, mangled tenants, lying there awaiting their last bivouac. On one side of the room was a small, silver crucifix above which hung the tricolored flag of the Republic guarding those who had died that it might live.

In the left wing was the emergency operating-room where the surgeons worked, frequently under fire. At the opposite end of the building was the room we had for our quarters and where we slept when occasion permitted. The place was quite frequently hit — on five separate

occasions while I was in the building — and its occupants suffered many narrow escapes. The location was regarded as so unsafe that an elaborate *abri* was finally constructed back of the *mairie*. This was an extraordinarily well-built and ample affair, consisting of several tunnels seven feet high in the centre, walled and roofed with heavy galvanized iron supported by stout beams. The roof at the highest point was fully ten feet below the surface of the ground. There were two rows of shelves running along both sides of the tunnels which had a total capacity of forty stretcher cases. At one end was a small operating-room, and there were two exits, so that, if one became blocked, the occupants might find egress through the other. Both of these exits were winding so as to prevent the admission of flying shell fragments and were draped with curtains to keep out the poison gas. Beside these curtains stood tubs of anti-gas solution for their drenching. This structure was proof against all save the heaviest shells and took some eight weeks in building.

### THE HUMAN SHELL — “HUIT JOURS DE PRISON”

WHEN on duty at Cappy we messed with some medical *sous-officiers* in a dugout, entrance to which was had by descending a steep flight of steps. Down in this cellar, in the dim twilight which there prevailed, we enjoyed many a meal. The officers were a genial lot, like most Frenchmen delightfully courteous and much given to quaffing *pinard*. Their chief occupation was the making of paper knives from copper shrapnel bands, and they never lacked for material, for each day the Boche threw in a fresh supply.

One of these chaps, through constant opportunity and long practice, could give a startling imitation of the shriek of a shell, an accomplishment which got him into trouble, for happening one day to perform this specialty while a non-appreciative and startled Colonel was passing, he was presented with eight days' arrest.

The cook of the mess was a believer in garlic — I might

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say a strong believer. Where he acquired the stuff amidst such surroundings was a mystery beyond solution, but acquire it he certainly did. Put him in the middle of the Sahara Desert and I am prepared to wager that within a half-hour that cook would dig up some garlic. He put it into everything, rice, meat, whatever we ate. I am convinced that, supposing he could have made a custard pie, he would have added garlic. His specialty was beef boiled in wine, a combination hard on the beef, hard on the wine, and hard on the partaker thereof.

Coming out of the cellar from mess one noon — a wet, dismal day I remember — I was startled into immobility to hear the splendid strains of the "Star-Spangled Banner," magnificently played on a piano. I was still standing at attention, and the last note had barely died away, when the one remaining door of a half-demolished house opened and a tall, handsome young fellow with the stripes of a corporal appeared, saluted, and bade me enter. I did so, and found myself in a small room upon the walls of which hung the usual military trappings. Stacked in the corners and leaning against the walls were a number of simple wooden crosses with the customary inscription, "*Mort pour la patrie.*" Five soldiers rose and bade me welcome. They were a group of grave-diggers and here they dwelt amid their crosses. Their profession did not seem to have affected their spirits, and they were as jolly a lot as I have ever seen, constantly chaffing each other, and when the chap at the piano — who, by the way, before the war had been a musician at the Carlton in London, and who spoke excellent English — struck a chord, they all automatically broke into song. It was splendidly done and they enjoyed it as thoroughly as did I. The piano they had rescued from a wrecked château at the other end of the town and to them it was a godsend indeed. Before I left, at my request, they sang the *Marseillaise*. I have seldom heard anything finer than when in that little, stricken town, amidst those gruesome tokens of war's toll, these men stood at attention and sounded

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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forth the stirring words of their country's hymn. When I left it was with a feeling that surely with such a spirit animating a people, there could be but one outcome to the struggle.

We had another twenty-four-hour station at the village of Cérisy some fifteen or more kilometres back of the line, where was located an operating hospital. Here we maintained always one car for the transportation of such wounded as required evacuation to the railhead. At this station we were privileged to sleep on stretchers in the same tent with the wounded. Personally I found one night in their quarters was quite enough for me. The groaning, the odor of anaesthetics, the blood, the raving of the delirious, and "the passing" of two of the inmates before morning drove me out to my car, where I often slept when on duty at the station.

We soon began to feel completely at home at Méricourt. Our schedule kept us busy without overworking us, and there was just enough risk in the life to lend it spice. We had a splendid Commander, an efficient *Chef*, and as a result the Squad worked in entire harmony. At this time we were attached to the 3d Colonials, a reckless, hard-fighting bunch, as fine a lot as serve the Tricolor. The relations existing between ourselves and the French could not have been more cordial. The innate courtesy and kindness, which is so characteristic of the people, found expression in so many ways and their appreciation so far exceeded any service we rendered that we could not help but be warmly drawn toward them, while their cheerful devotion and splendid courage held always our admiration.

Perhaps a few entries taken at random from my journal will serve as well as anything to give some idea of our life and the conditions under which we worked.

### NOTES AT MÉRICOURT

"TUESDAY, *March 14*. After a rat-disturbed night, got away on Route No. 3 to Proyart and Baraquette, evacu-



"BLOODY AND SILENT, BUT NOT DEFEATED"



THE "POSTE DE SECOURS" AT CAPPY, THE SOMME, 1916



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ating to Cérisy. At four this afternoon, with Brooke as orderly, made same route, evacuating to Villers-Bretonneux. There were so many *blessés* that I had to return to Baraquette for another load. We are just in from Villers-Bretonneux at 10 P.M. after a drive through the rain.

"*Saturday, March 18.* On route No. 2 to Chuignolles. Road was under fire, so sentry refused to let me return over it, as the way was up-grade and with a loaded car I could not go fast. Ran down it this afternoon, evacuating by another route. Put in an hour to-day making an almost bedstead out of old bloody stretchers and now the rats will have to jump a foot or so off the floor if they want to continue to use me as a speedway.

"*Thursday, March 23.* Slept well in the car at Cappy, but lost all inclination for breakfast on opening door of stretcher-bearer's room and seeing two bodies, one with its jaws shot away, the other, brought in from No Man's Land — half eaten by rats. Got a call to Chuignes before noon, evacuating to Cérisy. Of course worked on my car this afternoon; that goes without saying — the work, not the car. To-morrow we have another one of those dashed inspections, this time the General commanding the Division.

"*Thursday, March 30.* To Cappy early, with as many of the Squad as were off duty, to attend the funeral of the *Médecin Chef*. He was killed yesterday when peering over the parapet. It was a sad affair, yet withal impressive. We walked from the little shell-torn town, Cappy, to the cemetery just beyond the village, following the simple flag-draped box upon which rested the tunic and képi; and then, while the war planes circled and dipped above us and all around the guns spoke, we paid our last respects to a very gallant man. Waited till ten for wounded. At the exact minute I was leaving, three shells came in. One burst by the church and the other two just back of my machine as I crossed the bridge. They must have come from a small-bore gun, possibly a mortar, as they were not preceded by a screech as with a rifle shell.

Visited regimental dentist this afternoon and found him operating on a *poilu* whose teeth had been knocked out by a Boche gun butt in a recent charge. To-night the guns are going strong.

"Wednesday, April 5. The mess-room presented a ghastly sight this morning, a hand-grenade having been accidentally exploded there last night, blowing two men to bits which bits are still hanging to the walls. Got my spark-plugs in shape this morning. This afternoon attempted to take a nap, but a confounded battery just stationed here insisted on going into action, and as the shots were at half-minute intervals I got to counting the seconds in the intervals, banishing all chances of sleep. Two of the Squad are down with the *gale* — a skin disease contracted from the *blessés*, and which seems almost epidemic with the Division."

#### AMIENS — THE BRITISH HEADQUARTERS

IT was toward the end of March, and hence some three months after leaving Paris, that one morning I received orders to evacuate a load of wounded to the railroad hospital at Amiens, some forty kilometres from Méricourt. Amiens is a modern city, one of the most pleasant in France, a city of about one hundred thousand inhabitants with up-to-date shops, tramways, tea-rooms, and a decided air of gayety. As I drove my mud-spattered ambulance down its main street I felt singularly out of place. An hour and a half before I had been within rifle range of the German trenches where men were battling to the death and big guns barked their hate, and now, as though transported on a magic carpet, I found myself in the midst of peace, where dainty women tripped by, children laughed at play, and life untrammelled by war ran its course. After the weeks amid the mud and turmoil of the front, the transition was at first stupefying. After evacuating my wounded, I parked my car, and being off duty for the rest of the day I strolled about gaping like a countryman. A "burst" at the best restaurant I could

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find and a good cigar put me in an appreciative frame of mind and my impression of Amiens will always remain the most favorable. Though the city had been in the hands of the Huns for nearly a fortnight in the early part of the war, and had several times been the object of air raids, there was little indication of either. The beautiful cathedral was piled high with sandbags and the beautiful windows were screened as precaution against bomb éclats, but of the precautions such as I later saw in Bar-le-Duc, there were none.

Amiens at this time was the administrative Headquarters of the English Army of the Somme. Its streets were alive with English officers and Tommies. There were many "Jocks" in their kilts, besides, of course, many French officers. Being well back of the lines it was a great place for swanking, a condition of which the English officers especially took full advantage, and in their whipcords and shining Sam Brownes, they were the last word in military sartorialism.

### PERMISSION

HAVING now been at the front for three months I became entitled to *la permission*, the six days' leave, in theory granted the soldier once every three months. George's *permission* was also due, and we managed to arrange it so that we secured leave simultaneously. One of our cars was so well wrecked that it had to be sent to Paris, and accordingly we secured the assignment of taking this in. This car had lost its mud-guards and part of the top of the driving-seat; its lockers were gone and its sides had been pierced by shell splinters. It certainly looked as if "it had been through the war." It was afterwards sent to New York and there put on exhibition at the Allied Bazaar.

We set out for Paris on the morning of April 15. It was a fearful day for driving, hail and rain and a piercing wind, but we were *en permission*, so what cared we. It was on this voyage that, for the first and only time during my

service in the Army, I saw lancers. This group was some seventy kilometres back of the line. With their burnished *casques*, graceful weapons, and fluttering pennons they have left me one of the few memories of the picturesque which the war has furnished.

We made Beauvais in time for luncheon; found the little restaurant, and our mere appearance was sufficient to set the little waitress off into a severe attack of giggles. By four that afternoon we were in Paris. After one hundred days in the war zone, it seemed like another world. We took the military oath not to reveal information likely to be of value to the enemy and were free to do what we liked for six days. Personally, as I remember it, I pretty well divided the time between taking hot baths and consuming unlimited quantities of white bread and fresh butter. Often we found ourselves subconsciously listening and missing something,—the rumble of the guns. We enjoyed the respite, but the end of our *permission* found us willing, almost eager, to get back "out there."

It was after midnight—Easter morning—and the rain was falling when we ploughed our muddy way across "the campus" at Méricourt. It was cold, and the rat-infested garret, in the flickering light of an oil lamp, looked dismal enough as we felt our way across its dirty floor. Outside the sky was now and then lighted by a flare and from all around came the boom of the guns. We were home.

### SPRING AND HECTIC DAYS

MAY opened with delightfully warm weather, a condition that was not to continue. The brown fields were clothed in green. Up to within a few kilometres of the line the land had been cultivated, and wheat and oats flourished as though shells were not passing over and the grim Reaper himself were not ever present.

Early in the month our Division moved, going into *repos* some fifteen kilometres back of the line. It is a simple statement—"our Division moved." But think

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of twenty thousand men plodding along, twenty thousand brown guns bobbing and twenty thousand bayonets flopping against as many hips. Think of twenty thousand blue steel helmets covering as many sweaty, dusty heads; think of the transport for the men, the horses straining in their traces, the creaking wagons, the rumbling artillery, the clanging soup-wagons, the whizzing staff cars, and the honking of *camion* horns — think of this and you have some idea of what is embraced in the statement "our Division moved." We did not follow them, though we did assign four cars to serve them during *repos*, and to take care of the sick. Instead we were attached to the incoming Division, the 2d Colonials.

My journal shows there were some hectic days in May. In the record of May 2 I find: "Rolled pretty much all night, one call taking me to Éclusier. The road was shelled behind me while I was at the *poste*, knocking a tree across the way so that on my way back, the night being so dark, I could see absolutely nothing and I hit the tree and bent a guard. It's as nasty a run as I have ever made, a canal on one side, batteries on the other, and the whole way exposed to machine-gun-fire. Expected to be relieved here this morning, but one of the replacement cars is out of commission so that I am on for another twenty-four hours. To-day I measured the distance from where I was sitting last night to where the shell hit. It was exactly fourteen paces."

Again a week later: "Two cars out of commission, so I am fated for another forty-eight hours' shift here in Cappy. Last night was uneventful. To-day we have been bombarded five times. So far have made but two runs, returning from second under fire. We have been ordered to sleep to-night in the partially completed dugout, so I am writing this fifteen feet underground, with sandbags piled high above my head. Verily the day of the cave man has returned. Now for the blanket and, thanks to the dugout, a reasonable assurance of greeting to-morrow's sun."

It was in May that "Josh" won his recognition for bringing in his wounded from Éclusier under machine-gun-fire. I was not there, but I know he could not have been cooler had he been driving down Broadway.

### LEAVING MÉRICOURT

ON the 30th of May we received orders to change our base. The Squad was genuinely sorry to leave Méricourt. The village, which had looked so forbidding to us when we had first arrived, through the familiarity of three months' residence had grown to mean home. The peaceful canal with its graceful poplars where we used to swim, "the campus," the scene on moonlight nights of many a rousing chorus, the lane where the cars were parked, the little café, all held pleasant memories. Here we had endured the rigors of winter, had seen the coming and passing of spring, and now as summer was upon us we were leaving.

We left in fleet, about one in the afternoon, and an hour later drew up in the village of Bayonvillers on the farther side of the Route Nationale. We found it an attractive place, having two squares well shaded with fine trees. In peace times its population probably numbered about four thousand. The town was far enough back of the line to be out of range of field artillery and showed no sign of bombardment. Being only slightly off the main road and about midway between the line and Villers-Bretonneux, the location was a convenient one for us, as for the present we were maintaining the same schedules and routes which prevailed at Méricourt. We were assigned quarters in the loft of a brick barn, but some of us preferred more airy surroundings and pitched a tent under the trees in a little park in the centre of the town, thus establishing the "Bayonvillers Country Club." Later, because of the arrival of a fleet of *camions*, we moved the club to a meadow on the outskirts of the town. Mess was also established in a tent.

## PREPARING THE SOMME OFFENSIVE

EARLY in the spring it had become apparent that something was in the air. Ammunition *dépôts* began to appear, placed just out of gun range; *génie parcs*, with enormous quantities of barbed wire, trench-flooring, and other construction materials were established; a new road was being built from Bray to Cappy; additional aviation fields were laid out, and rows of hangars, elaborately painted to represent barns and ploughed fields, to deceive the enemy airmen, reared their bulky forms. Back of the line numerous tent hospitals sprang into being. Near Cappy immense siege guns, served by miniature railways, poked their ugly noses through concealing brush screens. Through the fields several new standard-gauge tracks made their way. The roads back of any army are always cluttered with supporting traffic, and as the spring wore on the traffic in the Somme increased day by day. There were huge five-ton *camions* loaded with shells, steam tractors bringing up big guns, caterpillar batteries, armored cars, mobile anti-aircraft guns, stone boats, mobile soup-kitchens, oxygen containers to combat poison gas, field artillery, searchlight sections, staff cars, telegraph and telephone wagons, long lines of motor busses now used as meal vans, horse wagons piled high with bread, portable forges, mule trains carrying machine-gun ammunition, two-wheeled carts carrying trench mortars. All the transport of war was there until by the first of June the roads back of the Somme front presented a congestion of traffic such as the world has never before seen. To the most casual observer it could not but be apparent that all this tremendous activity, the enormous supplies, the preparations, were not solely for defensive purposes. It could connote but one thing — an offensive on a great scale.

Directly opposite Cappy, within the German lines, lay the little shell-riddled village of Dompierre. Between the sandbags of the first-line trench I had peeped forth at it,

and as early as April I knew that the village was mined, for the electrician who wired the mine was a friend. I felt sure, therefore, that our Section was to be in the offensive when it came. But as to the day of the attack, of course that was a matter of speculation. As the days wore on all the talk was of "the attack." There was no longer any doubt as to the fact that an attack was to be launched; the question now was, simply, when? Both the firing and activity in the air had increased. Sometimes for hours at a time there would be continuous drum-fire and scarcely an hour passed without a fight between planes.

The opening days of June were wet and sodden. The weather was raw, almost cold, with frequent hailstorms, so that it was difficult to determine just what season was being observed. The roads, trodden by thousands of hobbed feet and cut by horses' hoofs and by tires, were deep with mud. It was *sale temps*. We found Bayonvillers teeming with troops. But if we thought the place already crowded, it was nothing compared to the congestion which the succeeding days brought. Day by day, almost hour by hour, the troops continued to come in, colonials, *chasseurs*, the famous zouaves, the Senegalese; and the sound of drum and bugle scarcely ever died.

### SENEGALESE

THE Senegalese were an amusing lot. I have been in Senegal, and when in the Congo, had a Senegalese for a headman, so I know a few words of their language. When I hailed them in this, they would immediately freeze into ebony statues, then their white teeth would flash in a dazzling smile as they hailed me as a white chief who knew their home. They were armed with deadly bush-knives, and for a dash over the top made splendid soldiers. In the trenches, however, they were nearly useless, as artillery fire put fear into their souls. It was said they never took or were taken prisoners, and many gruesome tales were current regarding this. Most certainly they must have been useful in night manœuvres, for with that

complexion it would be a matter of impossibility to determine which was the Senegalese and which was the night.

The lot upon which the "Country Club" had been the original and only squatter began to fill. A "155" battery moved in alongside us, and several "75" batteries with their ammunition transports became our neighbors; some horse transport convoys also creaked their way in. Horses by the hundred plunged and pulled at restraining ropes or stood with downcast heads — bone-weary of the struggle. All around us rose the little brown dog-tents and at night countless small fires flickered. It was like camping in the midst of a three-ring circus.

### THE WAITING

WE mingled with our neighbors and talked with them, but no matter how the conversation started, it was sure to come around to the one, great, all-important subject — the attack. Even for us, who were not to be "sent in," but whose duty it would be merely to carry those who had been, the delay and suspense were trying. How much worse, then, it must have been for those men who "were going over the top," waiting, waiting, many of them for their chance to greet death. I remember one afternoon talking with a chap who before the war had kept a restaurant in Prince's Street in Edinburgh, a restaurant at which I remember having dined. He was an odd little Frenchman, alert and bright-eyed, and every now and then as he talked he would pat me on the shoulder and exclaim, "Oh, my boy." He assured me that very soon now we should see the attack. "Oh, my boy, the world very soon will talk of this place. You will see the name of this village on maps" — a true prophecy, for when the New York papers came to us weeks after the attack had started, I saw a map with Cappy marked upon it. "Soon greater than Verdun we shall see great things, and oh, my boy, we are here to see them; we are part of them. *C'est magnifique!* but the waiting, the waiting; why can't they end it? Send us in! *Quant à moi* — I go with

the second wave, and if I come out *après la guerre*, you will come to my place, my place in Prince's Street which you know, and for you I will open the finest champagne of *la belle France* and we will raise our glasses and drink to these days; but oh, my boy, the waiting, *c'est terrible!*"

My journal for these days reflects the feeling of suspense: "Tuesday, June 13. *En repos* to-day for which I was thankful, since the rain still continues, with a low temperature. Spent most of the day in my bag reading, as being about the only place I could keep warm. The 20th zouaves marched into town to-day, their bugles playing. Their arrival and the presence of the Senegalese can mean but one thing: the attack will soon be launched. Well, if it's coming it can't come too soon. This suspense is trying. If this weather continues I will have trench foot again, as my shoes are leaking. Firing has been unusually heavy to-day, and to-night a terrific bombardment is in progress.

"Thursday, June 15. *Encore* this ghastly weather. More Senegalese coming in until the place looks like a Georgia camp-meeting. Three runs to-day; slow progress working through the traffic. Surely attack cannot be far off. Passed wreck of plane near Villers-Bretonneux which was fired on, falling and burning to death both pilot and driver.

"Sunday, June 18. To Fontaine lès Cappy, which incidentally was being shelled, evacuating to Villers-Bretonneux. Changed rear spring on my 'bus this afternoon, other having proved too light. Have fixed some hooks and straps on the car so that I can carry blanket roll and dunnage bag in event the line breaks and we follow the advance. 'New Number Nine' is ready for attack. Rumor says it will start in three days. Now that the clock has been set ahead — this occurred several days ago — we turn in by daylight."

Dry, hot weather succeeded the rains and in a day the mud of the roads had been beaten into dust. A khaki-colored fog hung over the sinuous line of never-ceasing

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traffic and choked man and beast. It was trying work driving now but still it was exhilarating, the feeling of being a part of a great push. By the middle of June the advance position from which we should operate from the time the first wave went over the top had been chosen. It was close back of the line near the *boyau* of Fontaine-lès Cappy. It was very much exposed and much in advance of the position usually taken by transport sections, but it appeared the spot of greatest usefulness and this being determined, our C.O. was not the man to question further.

### BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT

ON the morning of June 20 I left for duty at Cappy. My journal for that date reads: "Left quarters at eight this morning, reaching Cappy an hour later, taking on a load, evacuating at once to Villers-Bretonneux. This afternoon evacuated to Chuignolles. So far I have heard but one shell come in to-day. Our batteries, too, have been singularly quiet. The calm before the storm. If possible, the roads to-day were more congested than ever with every sort of vehicle from bicycle to steam tractor. It's now nine o'clock, though owing to change of time not nearly dark. Am a bit tired to-night, but have small idea of getting much rest."

Nor was I disappointed, for throughout the night the wounded came in and we drove almost without pause. From my last evacuation I got back to Cappy about six in the morning, and as our relief was due at eight I did not consider it worth while to turn in. The day promised to be hot and clear. Already the shelling had started. It was a point of honor among the Squad to be prompt in our relief, and Gile and I were therefore surprised when no cars had appeared by 8.30. It was about ten o'clock and we had exhausted our conjectures when two cars of a French Section rolled up. We sensed at once that something had happened. One of the drivers climbed down from his car and came over to where we were standing.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

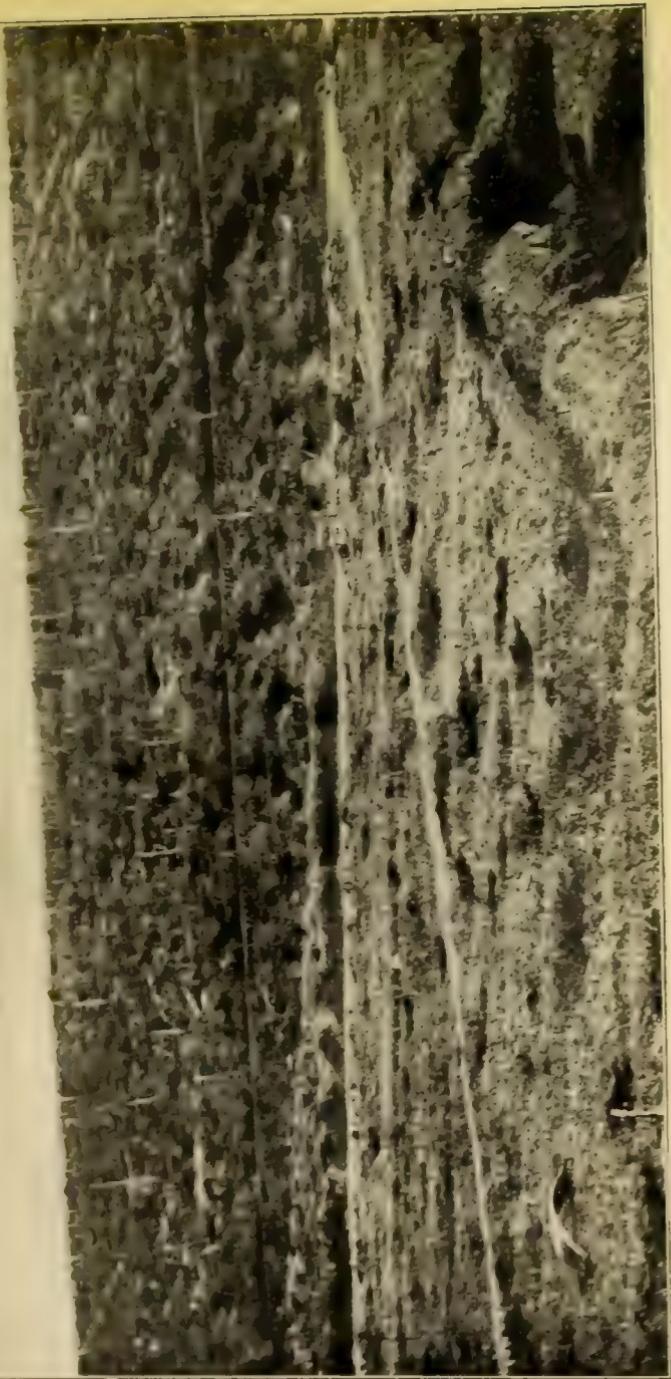
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We exchanged salutes. "Messieurs," he said, "your Section has been replaced by ours. I am directed to instruct you to report at once at your quarters." The concussion from a "210" could scarcely have stunned us more than the announcement, "Replaced." It was impossible; there must be some mistake. After all our months of work, which we knew had been efficient, after all our preparations for the attack. Replaced? No, it could not be. We would find out there had been a misunderstanding. In a daze we cranked our cars and drove slowly away from the familiar old *poste*.

Several shells had passed us as we had stood talking, and as I reached the canal bridge I found one had hit there. Beside the road lay a dead man, and three wounded were being dressed. I got out my stretchers and evacuated them to the field hospital at Cérisy. It was my last evacuation from Cappy. I reached quarters about noon, finding the Squad at mess. One glance at the fellows confirmed the morning's news. I have seldom seen a more thoroughly disgusted bunch of men. It was true; we had been replaced and were leaving for parts unknown tomorrow. Somewhere back in Automobile Headquarters in Paris a wire had been pulled, and that wire attached to us was to pull us away from the greatest offensive in history. We felt rather bitter about it at first, for we felt that in a way it reflected on our ability or even our nerve, but when we learned that the *Médecin Divisionnaire* and even the General of our Division had protested against our removal, had spoken of our work in the highest terms, our disappointment was softened, and so with the philosophy which army life brings we said, "*C'est la guerre,*" struck our tents and prepared for the morrow's departure.

### THE VOIE SACRÉE

WHATEVER may have been the aspect of Bar-le-Duc in normal times, now it impressed me as a city utterly weary, a city sapped of vitality. As a weary man, ex-



SHELL-POCKED ROAD NEAR DOUAUMONT OVER WHICH THE AMBULANCES  
ROLLED ALL THROUGH THE BATTLE OF VERDUN



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hausted by constant strain and tension to a condition of listless indifference — thus did Bar-le-Duc impress me. And well might it be weary. For months troops had poured through its streets, men of a score of races, men from far countries and from the heart of France. Here they had passed on their way to the Vortex, and through these streets the bleeding wrecks of the same men had been borne back. Day and night without ceasing the munition *camions* had rumbled by. While winter ended, spring came and passed, and summer blossomed, the thundering guns had not ceased to sound. For five months this unrelenting strain had endured and Bar-le-Duc was like a weary soul.

It was close to midnight, and "dark as the inside of a cow," when the camp was startled into wakefulness by the cry, "Show a leg! Everybody out, we're called!" Outside the rain beat against the cars and a mournful wind slapped the branches overhead. It was a painful transition from the warm comfort of the blankets to the raw chill of the night, but no one hesitated. Lanterns began to flicker; figures struggling into tunic and knickers tumbled out of cars; objects were pulled forth and piled on the ground, bedding was thrown under ground-sheets; stretchers shot into places; engines began to cough and snort, and searchlights pierced the night. The C.O., moving from car to car, issued the order, "In convoy order; gas-masks and helmets; head-lights till further orders." In twenty minutes after the first call, every car was ready, every man in his place, and the convoy formed. "Where are we going?" was the inquiry which shot from car to car, and, though no one knew, the answer was invariably "Verdun."

Presently the whistle blew and we moved out. Down through the sleeping city of Bar-le-Duc we went, and there, where the transparency blazoned the legend, "Verdun," we obeyed the silent injunction of the pointing arrow and turned to the left. We passed through the outskirts of the city and presently entered upon a broad,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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pitted road. Well might the road be pitted, for there was the *Voie Sacrée* — the Sacred Way — over which had passed every division of the French Army, the way over which thousands of the men of France had passed never to return.

Beyond question one reason why Verdun was chosen by the Germans as the point against which their great offensive was launched was the weakness of the supporting railroad facilities. Normally the city is served by two lines of railways, one running north from Saint-Mihiel, the other coming in from the west by Sainte-Ménehould. Since Saint-Mihiel was in their hands, the first road was eliminated, and though the second was not in the enemy's hands, it was commanded by his batteries. This left the position of Verdun without supporting railroads, heretofore considered necessary for maintaining an army. But the Hun had reckoned without two things, the wonderful organization of the French motor transport, and the *Voie Sacrée*. Never had a road been called upon to bear the burdens which now were thrown upon this way. An armada of ten thousand motor *camions* was launched, and day and night in two unbroken lines this fleet held its course and served the defending armies of Verdun.

Now we, too, passed down the road, privileged to become part of that support.

A half-moon, blood-red as though it, too, had taken on the hue of war, appeared in the broken sky, described a half arc and disappeared. Once a tremendous light illuminated the whole northern sky. Possibly it was the explosion of a mine. We never knew what. The noise of the guns grew louder as we went on. The gray fore-tone of dawn was streaking the east when we halted by a group of tents at the roadside. We were beyond Lemmes, some one said, but this meant nothing to us. It was a field hospital and here we found our men, a hundred of them. They were all gas victims as their wracking, painful coughs indicated.

The rain had ceased. The sun rose and warmed things

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a bit. It was seven o'clock in the morning and Bar-le-Duc was beginning to stir itself for another weary day as we reached the evacuation hospital. Three quarters of an hour later we straggled into Véel, having covered over a hundred kilometres since midnight.

After the hard rolling of the last few days there was much to be done about the cars. Bolts needed tightening, grease-cups had to be filled, and many minor repairs were to be made. This consumed most of the day and with only a couple of hours' sleep to our credit from the night before we were genuinely tired when we rolled into our blankets that night and fervently hoped for an undisturbed rest.

But such was not to be our fortune. At 2.30 in the morning it came — the call. In the gray of dawn we wound through Bar-le-Duc. In the doorways and on street benches we could just discern the motionless forms of soldiers wrapped in chilly slumber. Once more we turned out upon the Sacred Way. Our destination was the village of Dugny, of which I shall have more to say later, — perhaps seven kilometres from Verdun. A blow-out just beyond Bar-le-Duc lost me the convoy, which in turn lost me the road, and I wandered through a series of half-demolished villages, not knowing how near I might be to the line, before I finally again emerged on the *Voie Sacrée* and reached Dugny. Here I was surprised to see another section of the American Ambulance. It proved to be Section Eight which we were shortly to replace.

We found the driving station at Dugny overflowing with wounded and the men placed in rows on straw in a stable. Again we filled our cars, this time mostly with *couchés*, as before gas victims. It was now broad daylight. The roadway even at night was a mass of traffic, mostly convoys of heavy *camions*. These followed each other in an endless belt, the loaded ones coming toward Verdun, the unloaded going away. They proceeded at an average speed of eighteen kilometres an hour at a distance of sixty feet from each other. It became necessary for us, if we were to make any progress at all, to squirm our way

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through the maze, continually dodging in and out of the convoys to avoid staff cars, yet always working by the slower moving vehicles. It was the most trying kind of driving and required extreme care lest our cars be crushed beneath the giant munition trucks or lest the unforgivable sin of causing a block be committed. It was disheartening to work by a convoy of eighty *camions*, dodging in and out to avoid cars coming in the opposite direction, and then just as the head of the line was reached to have a tire go bang. It is such happenings that try the soul of the *ambulancier*.

Not till two o'clock in the afternoon did we reach Véel, having completed the evacuation, and get our first meal of the day. We were content to rest the remainder of the day and the day following, doing only such work as the cars required, and we were very glad that no demand came for our services. On the third morning a number of us secured permission to go into Bar-le-Duc in the "chow" *camion*. We had just completed a hot bath and were making for a *pâtisserie* when the Lieutenant's car came up. "Get everybody together!" he shouted; "we're leaving for Verdun at one o'clock."

At camp we found the tents already struck and a cold *singe* lunch awaiting us. Promptly at one we formed in convoy and again headed for the Sacred Way. At four o'clock that afternoon we reached the village of Dugny. This was the 28th of June. The trek from the Somme to Verdun was finished.

ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Washington, D.C.; George Washington and Yale Universities; served in Sections One and Three, 1915-17; subsequently with U.S. Army. The above extracts are from his book, *Behind the Wheel of a War Ambulance* (McBride, 1918).

## V

## DUGNY — THE VERDUN FRONT

ON June 21, 1916, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came the order from General Headquarters, commanding the Section to proceed immediately to Verdun, where the great battle had been raging constantly since February. When Section One arrived on the Meuse the Boches were making their final great attempt to capture Verdun and the inner line of forts — Tavannes, Saint-Michel and Souville — as well as the city itself. The roads in the vicinity were under heavy bombardment and gas hung for days in the low places, all of which added to the strenuousness of our work.

By June 28 the Section was quartered at Dugny, a tumble-down town a few miles south of Verdun, where we relieved Section Eight on the right bank of the Meuse, the *postes* being located at Fort de Tavannes, the Cabaret Rouge and the Mardi-Gras redoubt. The cantonment at Dugny left much to be desired. The sleeping quarters for the entire Section, including the French personnel, were in a barn loft, beneath which horses were stabled. What with the coming and going, the noise from the "Atelier Club," as the poker players called themselves, the coughing of gas victims, frequently placed in the entrance of the barn, and many other disturbances, the situation was not conducive to rest. Then, too, it rained most of the time, except when it drizzled, and mud was not among the things which the place lacked.

Nor at the *poste* of the Cabaret Rouge could conditions be said to be cheery. The festive name which the place bore was scarcely justified. It was a stone barn with a straw-covered floor and a leaky roof, the walls pierced in three places with shell holes, and mud ankle-deep all around. Then there were the wounded who were stretched

by the walls; and the air was heavy with the smell of wet clothing, disinfectants, and drying blood. In the only other room of the barn were the dead awaiting burial, their rigid mangled forms lying in rows on *brancards*. In addition the *poste* was entirely surrounded by batteries whose din was unceasing, and furthermore there was hardly a minute when German shells were not coming in.

Although there was not a man in the squad who was not repeatedly under fire during the Section's stay at Dugny, it remained for Brooke Edwards, of Philadelphia, to experience the most remarkably close call. While *en route* at night to "Cabaret," a shell exploded by the side of his car, blowing off two tires, the *éclats* passing entirely through both sides and the roof of the car, and some of the fragments lodging within six inches of Edwards, who nevertheless was unscratched. A day or so later, when Tingle Culbertson was pushing along the Belleray Road in his little car, he heard a crash, and a column of earth, not twenty yards off the road, spouted into the air. Two more shells came in quick succession, but they were, so to speak, unneeded, for Culbertson was doing all that *essence* and an intimate knowledge of a Ford could do to make "*numéro douze*" exceed any previous records.

On the morning of July 12 the Section completed its work at Verdun, every ambulance having served up to the last moment to the limit of its capacity. Exceptional luck had followed the Section. The French Section, with which it shared the work, had lost two men, one by gas, another by shell-fire; the American Section which preceded us had had one man wounded, and the English Section, up to the time when we left, had been five days in the field with the loss of one man.

An account of our stay at Dugny could not be perfect without mention of the Section's *Chef*, Herbert Townsend. Instead of remaining out of the zone of fire, as he might have done, he was probably under fire more than any other member, remaining at "Cabaret" for hours at a time, putting new spirit into his men by his presence and

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giving them confidence and encouragement when they most needed it. As though this were not enough, he insisted on accompanying the ambulances on their most dangerous run, the nightly trip to Fort de Tavannes.

### LEAVING VERDUN — CHÂTEAU BILLEMONT

THE Section left the Verdun sector on July 13 and went *en repos*, but returned there on August 15, taking up its quarters in a handsome country house north of Dugny, known as Château Billemont. The trip to the *poste* — Caserne Marceau — though it could scarcely be described as enjoyable, proved very interesting. Leaving Billemont, the cars ran some two miles over excellent roads, entering Verdun by the Porte Neuve. On the right, and dominating the ruined city, lay the imposing citadel, constructed by Vauban for Louis XIV. Farther on, the cars passed the huge shell-wrecked market, the slightly damaged theatre, then on through a blackened, chaotic mass of stone, bricks, and twisted steel, past the fine old gray stone tower of the Pont Chaussée. Leaving the city by the Pont Chaussée, the ambulances followed the Faubourg Pavé to the Fort de Souville road, where the *poste* was located, near the shattered buildings of the Caserne Marceau and a wrecked cistern — a cement tank mounted on a tower — on account of which the *poste* was often called La Citerne and considered at this time the most important one on the Verdun front.

### VERDUN AGAIN — FLEURY

THE German trenches were just across the ridge from La Citerne, about half a kilometre distant, where the battle of Fleury was in progress, the village changing hands some ten times before it finally remained in possession of the French. Here the entire Section worked almost day and night for about three weeks, the hardest strain it had yet been under.

On September 9 the Section was relieved, having served at Caserne Marceau longer than any preceding

section. Two days later two French ambulances were destroyed at this *poste* and several drivers and *brancardiers* were killed, in consequence of which the *poste* was abandoned for a location farther back.

On account of the service rendered at Caserne Marceau, Herbert Townsend, Giles Francklyn, Robert Bowman, Brooke Edwards, and James M. Sponagle, and the Section as a whole, received citations.

Leaving the Verdun sector on September 11, three days were spent *en repos* at Triaucourt, when we moved into the Argonne, being quartered at La Grange-aux-Bois, just east of Sainte-Ménehould. The work was light and without special incident during the four months there, which, with the beautiful scenery, furnished a very pleasing contrast to our experience at Verdun.

### THE DEATH OF HOWARD B. LINES

THE first death in the Section occurred during this period, when, on December 23, 1916, Howard B. Lines, of Dartmouth, succumbed to pneumonia. The funeral took place on Christmas morning. A Protestant chaplain of the division read the burial service in the open entry way of the house where Lines had died, and the body accompanied by French soldiers and the members of the Section, and Inspector-General Andrew, and Hon. Robert Bacon, who had come from Paris, was carried to the snow-covered military cemetery on a neighboring hill. Young Lines was with the Section in Belgium from September, 1915, to January, 1916, when he returned to America to complete his work at Harvard Law School; he had rejoined the Section in October, 1916.

On January 19, the Section left La Grange-aux-Bois for Triaucourt where we were quartered in a large room on the lower floor of a hospital. The place was cheerless and quite cold. Our meals were served in an old stable several blocks distant. We soon discovered that the facilities for recreation and amusement in Triaucourt in winter were limited in the extreme. About the only relief



FUNERAL OF HOWARD LINES AT LA GRANGE-AUX-BOIS  
CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1916



A FOREST IN CHAMPAGNE



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from continual strolling about the village were the two or three little cafés where a few of the hours might be whiled away and the canteen conducted by some English women where hot coffee, tea, and cocoa were served free and where English papers might be read in comparative comfort. The many little courtesies shown us by these ladies will be long remembered.

### HILL 304 - MORT HOMME

AFTER three days were spent *en repos* at Triaucourt, we went into the Hill 304 - Mort-Homme sector, with *postes* at Esnes, Montzéville, the Bois de Récicourt and the Bois d'Esnes. The combination of extremely cold weather and very poor quarters at Ippécourt gave the section another taste of the hardships of war, until, two weeks later, better quarters were found at Dombasle.

Ippécourt, by the way, is a village situated twenty-one kilometres southwest of Verdun, and our quarters were located a kilometre east of it, on the road to Souilly. They consisted of a long shed, set on a hillside, and constructed of rough boards and branches of trees. The architect's predominating idea seems to have been to secure ample ventilation, and in this he was highly successful. The shed was divided by partitions, even more flimsily constructed than the walls of the structure, into small rooms with space — shelter is hardly the word — for from three to five men each. A larger room at the north end served as a dining-room. Light was admitted through windows which were covered with glazed cloth and through numerous cracks as well. The heating apparatus consisted of a number of home-made stoves left behind by our predecessors in Section Four, but which they reclaimed three or four days after our arrival, so that even the modicum of comfort which these stoves afforded was thereafter denied us. We did manage, however, by hook or crook, to secure stoves for two or three rooms which radiated, at times, enough heat to thaw out half-frozen fingers or toes. Our fuel consisted of scraps of green tim-

bers secured from a near-by sawmill and whatever under-brush we were able to find in the vicinity. One of the vivid, if unpleasant, memories of these days is the sound of the bell at 7 A.M., which called us from between comparatively warm blankets to the dining-room which was devoid of even the small amount of heat that a bright sun contributed to the world outside. At breakfast the bread was warm, that is, it had been placed in the oven long enough to raise considerably the temperature of the exterior, but the inside of the loaf was always frozen. The coffee seldom was hot. After breakfast the most effective means of becoming comfortably warm was to attempt to crank one's Ford. Two hours was the average length of time required to start a car. The water in the radiators froze in an incredibly short time if the motors were allowed to cool. On one occasion when the radiator on the staff car had become overheated, the boiling water which was thrown out turned to ice before it struck the windshield. During the seventeen days we were quartered at Ippécourt, the thermometer was almost constantly below zero (Fahrenheit).

The feature of the work at this time was the German attack on Hill 304 which began on January 25, after a violent bombardment. The attacks and counter-attacks continued for about a week, during which time every car that was not disabled by the miserable roads and the even more miserable weather was running almost constantly.

After these attacks had subsided, we had a moderate amount of work, an average of six cars a day running. But the sector was never entirely quiet, there being more or less artillery activity at all times, considerable gas sent over by the Boches and a *coup de main* occurring every few days. Montzéville, Esnes, and the road between these two villages received shells quite often, and narrow escapes were common enough to relieve the monotony of camp life. This road, in fact, was exposed to the view of the Germans whose trenches were barely two kilometres

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distant on Mort Homme; and merely to go over it was always something of an adventure.

### THE SECTION'S "BLUE BOOK"

THE following description of this road from Jubécourt to Esnes, taken from the Section's "Blue Book," will give the reader a good idea of the troubles and trials of our rolling:

"Leaving the *poste des brancardiers* at Jubécourt, turn right on sharp grade. This is Ringwalt Corner; for it was here that Ringwalt went over the bank on the night that we took over the sector, his car turning over twice. How he managed to get over on the left-hand side of the road and slip over the bank while going up hill on low speed, nobody knows; but he did it. Continue north over fairly level route, part of it very rough, to Brocourt (3.5 km.) entering the village over miserable piece of corduroy road after left turn at cemetery. Bear right, passing to rear of church. Beware of other roads leading to Auzéville, Brabant, and Jouy. Sentry at corner. Pass sign, '*Éteignez vos lumières*,' descending steep hill, cross small railroad, — munitions *dépôt* down gulch to the left, large gun to the right. Ascend steep grade and continue along level road, cross old Roman road and pass on the right a *génie* camp situated in a small wood — Bois de Fouchères. Continue over very rough stretch of road to sentry box (6.5 km.) turn sharp to right. Country immediately surrounding the sentry box is quite bare. From this point there is a very good view of Clermont-en-Argonne, due west; and the eastern slope of the Argonne Forest, as far south as the Côte des Cerfs near Brizeaux, is also visible. Continue along winding road — fine view of Dombasle and country to the northeast, especially the Bois de Béthelainville — downhill into Dombasle-en-Argonne (11.1 km.) cross Sainte-Ménehould-Verdun railroad, turn left over small bridge and cross Paris-Metz Grande Route (elevation 235 m.) passing on the right a picturesque ruin with tall chimneys and extensive garden;

bear left through the village and continue on gentle upgrade. Barracks on hillside to left; Béthelainville *poste de secours* in cave on hillside on right. Road from this point is extremely rough. Pass *source* on right and enter Bois de Béthelainville — ammunition *dépôt* resembling stone quarry on right. Continue through wood — batteries on both sides of the road. Emerging from the wood (elevation 328 m.), we have good outlook, including view of hills near Chattancourt, le Mort Homme, Hill 310, Hill 304, and vicinity of Montfaucon and other points beyond the German lines. Descending from this point by easy grade along tree-lined road with shell-holes on either side, enter Montzéville (17.8 km. elevation 240 m.). The *poste de secours* is situated in a cave on the left. Along the left or west side of the village lies Hill 310 on which many batteries are planted. Pedestrians may take path across Hill 310 to Esnes — 2 km. Leaving Montzéville, road bears slightly left and enters the 'Bad Lands' road — extremely rough passage over slight rise and stretch of uncrushed stone. In field to left are batteries of *soixante-quinze* disguised as pig-sties. Road is bordered by stumps. Beware of extremely rocky place, which must be crossed on low speed, and a short distance farther on, another one even worse. Bear left at fork — road to right goes to Chattancourt. Ascend easy grade; road very rough, *soixante-quinze* batteries to left, camouflage made of branches erected on right side of road. In this vicinity drivers may expect to meet field kitchens and droves of burros at any hour after dark, until 3 A.M. Pass inverted fork in road where highway from Marre joins at acute angle. Now we are at Toy's corner. The road from this corner to the next corner — about half a kilometre — is within plain view of the German trenches on le Mort Homme, two kilometres to the north. Begin gentle descent, watch for new shell-holes, turn abrupt left (elevation 234 m.) probably the most dangerous point on the road, the corner being subject to indiscriminate shelling at all hours, and extremely skiddy in icy weather. We are now

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overlooking the village of Esnes. Continue gentle descent, pass wrecked ambulance on right, where is fine view of Hill 304 about a kilometre to the right, ruins of houses on either side, dead horse on the right, dead donkey and pile of wire and other *génie* material on left. At this point the road becomes a perfect morass of mud and ice, which can be crossed only on low speed and by the exercise of the utmost caution to avoid crevices, boulders, and sink-holes. Pearl, Tyson, and Hibbard became fast in this hole on the night of January 25-26, and Farlow, Kurtz, Flynn, and Wood on the night of February 16-17. Arriving at corner with tower of ruined church on right (elevation 225 m.) cross bad ditch and turn into narrow lane passing to left of church. Avoid large shell-holes on left side of road and 15 metres farther on, another shell-hole on left, opposite stone watering trough on right. Continue 10 metres over rocks to ruined château on right (21.8 km.). Turn car in small yard covered with rubbish. End of route."

### VADELAINCOURT — CHAMPAGNE

ON March 14, 1917, the Section went *en repos* near by, at Vadelaincourt. While there Benjamin R. Woodworth became *Chef* of the Section, James M. Sponagle being made *Sous-Chef*. The men were quartered in an aviation field and became well acquainted with many of the aviators, a pleasant feature of our sojourn there. We remained at Vadelaincourt one month and then departed for the Champagne front, stopping, however, for two days at Dombasle, to renew acquaintance with familiar scenes around Côte 304. Here General Herr, commanding the Sixteenth Army Corps, reviewed the Section, shaking hands with each man and expressing his appreciation of our work and his keen regret at our departure. A short time later the Section was cited by order of the Sixteenth Army Corps, and four of its members were cited individually.

It was with the anticipation of great things that the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

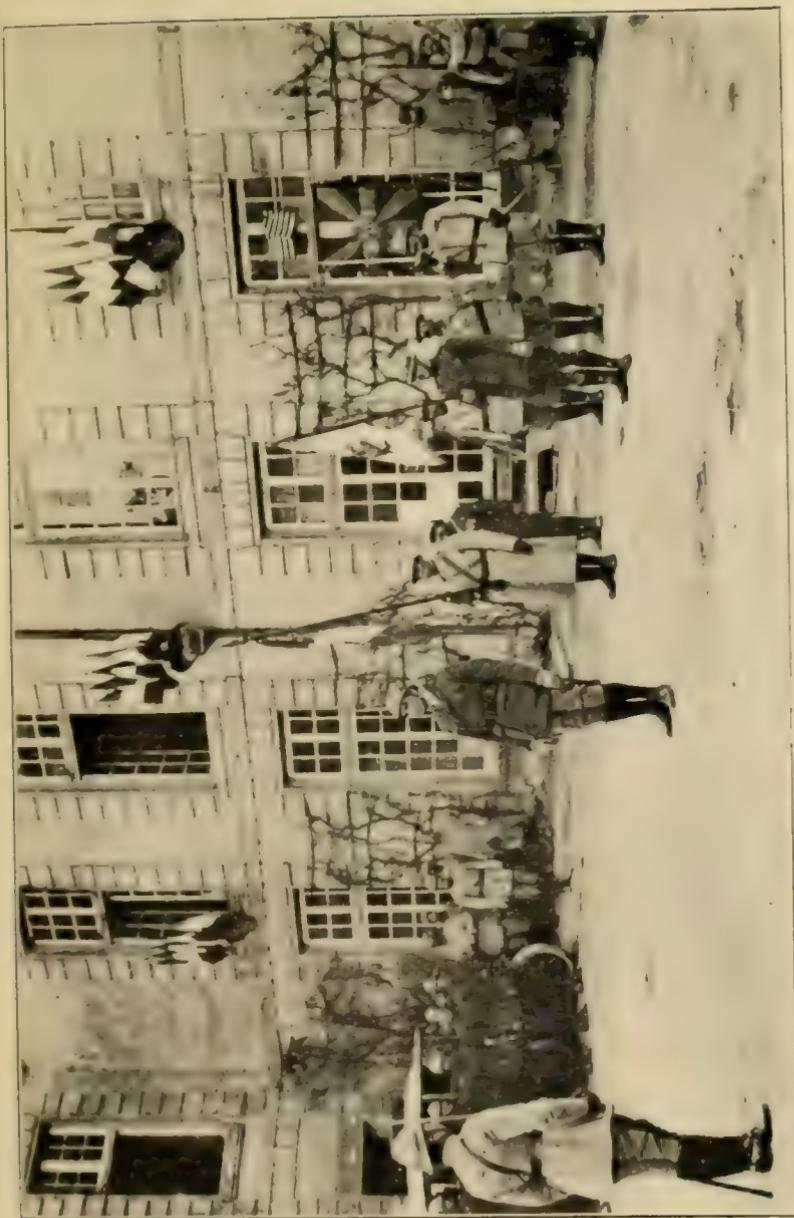
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Section departed for the Champagne front where, it was rumored, we were to take part in the great offensive just beginning in the neighborhood of Reims. But instead, we found ourselves once more *en repos*, this time in the sector where every one had looked forward to the most stirring times in the Section's history. The keen disappointment of the men was hardly allayed by the fact that they were quartered in a seventeenth-century château and that they were able to make occasional visits to Reims and the historic cathedral. Some of the men witnessed the burning, on May 3, of the Hôtel de Ville, after a large number of incendiary shells had been thrown in the vicinity.

### THE LEGION OF HONOR FOR MR. ANDREW

ON April 29, 1917, Inspector-General Andrew received the Cross of the Legion of Honor, the ceremony being held in front of the château at Muizon. If the presentation had taken place at the Invalides the setting could not have been more impressive. There was a military band which supplied music, punctuated by the thundering of some big guns located near by. The presentation of the Cross was made by General Ragueneau, of General Nivelle's staff. In front of an imposing group of French officers stood two standard bearers, one a French Lieutenant carrying the tricolor and the other James M. Sponagle, carrying our Section flag on which appeared the *Croix de Guerre* and the names of the campaigns.

While we were at Dombasle, by the way, we enjoyed several visits from Mr. Andrew. On March 1, he and Sponagle inspected the cars with a view to possible improvement in the construction of the bodies. Townsend offered the suggestion that the side boxes should be enlarged to provide ample space, not only for tools, but for personal equipment which drivers require while on service. Mr. Andrew argued that there was already plenty of room; in fact if more space were provided it would simply mean that many of the cars would be loaded down



GENERAL RAGENEAU CONFERRING UPON MR. ANDREW THE CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOR  
IN THE QUARTERS OF SECTION ONE AT MIVZON (NEAR REIMS), APRIL 29, 1917



## SECTION ONE

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with souvenirs and junk. But Townsend insisted that more space was necessary, whereupon Mr. Andrew said, "Well, Ned, let's see what you've got in your boxes, anyway." So lifting up the lids they found several *obus* in his side boxes and in an arm box a dead owl!

On May 6 the Section suffered one of the most severe losses to its personnel that had occurred since its organization, when Lieutenant de Kersauson, who for two years had been its energetic and highly prized leader, was ordered to take charge of the new training school for American officers at Meaux. A day or two later, Lieutenant James F. Reymond arrived and assumed charge of the Section.

During the latter part of May the Section began working in connection with a division of dismounted cavalry attached to the Fifth Army. The line extended from Cauroy to Brimont, the *poste de secours* being located on the Reims-Laon highway, in sight of the German trenches. The work was very light and two cars, stationed at Villers-Franqueux, went down at night only. One of the interesting sights from this village was the occasional shelling of Brimont, about three kilometres away, by the French guns, which from various points on the road between Muizon and Villers-Franqueux, the German shells could be seen falling on Reims.

### WOODWORTH KILLED

ON June 15 Benjamin R. Woodworth, the Section's *Chef*, was instantly killed while riding as a passenger in a French aeroplane. The accident occurred as Woodworth and Chatkoff, the pilot, a member of an *escadrille* near Muizon, were leaving the grounds of the Lafayette Escadrille near Soissons. The interment took place at Châlons-sur-Vesle with military honors. "Woody" was a member of the Section from June, 1915, to July, 1916. He reentered the service in November, 1916, and had been *Chef* of the Section since April, 1917. W. Yorke Stevenson succeeded him as *Chef*, and the latter part of

June, James M. Sponagle resigned as *Sous-Chef* to become *Chef* of Section Sixty-Five, being succeeded by James M. White.

On June 21, the Section moved to Louvois, an attractive village in the midst of the Champagne district some fifteen kilometres southeast of Reims where were two *postes* — one in the almost demolished village of Sillery and the other at a point on the Aisne-Marne canal, known as l'Espérance. One car was kept constantly at the latter *poste* and another was held at the Château Romont, a beautiful place, while four cars remained at the near-by village of Ludes to relieve these two.

The sector was comparatively quiet. The lines had remained practically stationary for more than two years and the peasants could be seen working daily in the fields within plain view of and almost up to the trenches. From Ludes and Château Romont the German positions were visible from Reims to Mont Cornillet. At this time there was considerable activity around Mont Cornillet and Mont Haut, a little farther east, and there was an occasional bombardment or a *coup de main* in front of Sillery or l'Espérance, because of the proximity to the more active sector. Evacuations were to Ludes, Chenay, Louvois, and Épernay.

#### NORTON KILLED

ON the evening of July 12 George Frederick Norton was killed by an air bomb while on duty at Ludes. Norton and the other men on duty there at that time — Robert H. Gamble, Hugh Elliott, and Richard Oller — had turned in for the night, when at about ten-thirty a German plane was heard in the vicinity and two bombs exploded on the other side of the village. Norton arose, and was looking out of the window of the chalet, when a third bomb exploded just across the road about twenty yards away, at least three *éclats* striking him, killing him instantly and piercing the wall of the chalet in many places. The other men had very narrow escapes; indeed Gamble received

## SECTION ONE

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a slight wound in the shoulder, though he was able to continue on duty for forty-eight hours.

The funeral service over the body of Norton was held the following evening at dusk. As the village was within plain view of the German lines, it was not possible to hold it during the day. The French chaplain who conducted the service spoke simply but eloquently of the beautiful spirit of sacrifice which led Norton to offer his services to France. The body was interred with full military honors in a new cemetery on the edge of the village. Norton was cited to the order of the Army and was awarded the *Croix de Guerre* with palm. Three other members of the Section were also cited on the same occasion.

### VERDUN AGAIN

ON July 23 the Section left this beautiful region of the Champagne and went via Bar-le-Duc to Évres where one week was spent *en repos*. Everywhere were rumors of the great offensive about to be started on the Meuse, and in August the Section moved on to Verdun and began work on the right bank. How many had been the changes on the historic battlefield within the past year! The village of Fleury, the centre of such terrific attacks and counter-attacks a year before, was now so utterly razed that some of the men passed it several times before they could believe that the maps had it correctly located, while the Caserne Marceau, near Fort Saint-Michel, which in August, 1916, was an advanced *poste* with the German trenches less than a kilometre distant across the ridge, was now well to the rear.

Four cars stationed here went on call to *postes* at Saint-Fine, near Fort Souville, La Source near Vaux, and Chambouillat and Carrière Sud near Douaumont. Other cars served *postes* near Fort Tavannes and at Carrière d'Haudromont near Louvemont, all of which points were held by the Germans when the Section worked there the year before and some of which were then well behind the battle

lines. The conditions under which we labored were trying from the very first, for the roads were congested with traffic, were frequently shelled, and gas was encountered almost every night.

The men were quartered at first at Haudainville; but after a few days we secured a site for our tents just outside the hospital grounds at the Caserne Beveaux, on the south side of Verdun. All cars evacuated to this hospital, except during the first few days when the Maison Nathan in Verdun, near the Porte de Saint-Paul, was used.

The artillery bombardment, which was expected daily, did not begin in earnest until about August 14. A day or two later a Red Cross ambulance section — S.S.U. 61 — began working with Section One at all the *postes* except Carrière d'Haudromont, which we continued to care for unaided until the infantry attack began, when we surrendered it to two French ambulance sections.

### PEARL WOUNDED — THE VERDUN ATTACK, 1917

ON the evening of August 16 William A. Pearl, the Section mechanic, was severely wounded while on the way to Haudromont with Rice, to repair a disabled car. A shell exploded a few yards from the car in which they were riding and a large *éclat* passed through Pearl's forearm, completely disabling his hand so that he had to be evacuated to Paris.

The first infantry attack was launched early on the morning of the 20th with magnificent success for the French. Hill 304, the Mort Homme, the Bois des Corbeaux, the Bois de Cumières, the Côte du Talon, Champneuville, Hill 344, Mormont Farm, and Hill 240 were entirely retaken. In the morning Lieutenant Reymond went with the first cars to the Carrière Sud and rendered such valuable aid in clearing the roads of wrecked wagons, dead horses, and munition trucks that he was cited shortly after by the Division. German counter-attacks followed, but the French continued to attack with vigor, Beaumont falling into their hands on the 26th.

## SECTION ONE

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The fighting on both sides, especially the artillery activity, continued heavy day and night and reacted on us. Every car in the Section received its quota of shell-holes, one car driven by Ryan being utterly demolished while standing in front of the *poste* of Carrière Sud. A short time before the sides of two cars — driven by Flynn and Tapley — had been blown out by shells at Haudromont. On several occasions shells exploded near ambulances on the road, when the *couchés* inside the car became so frightened that they jumped off their stretchers and took refuge in near-by *abris*. At times it was impossible to go through and we had first of all to repair the road ourselves by filling the holes with loose rocks and earth. Holt was badly gassed near Haudromont, a shell exploding near him while he was standing beside his car waiting for a congestion of artillery caissons and guns to let him through. He was knocked down, his mask fell off, and he was rendered practically unconscious. After being dragged to a *poste de secours* and given the anti-gas treatment, he insisted upon resuming work, for which he received a fine citation.

### CLOSING DAYS AT VERDUN

DURING the last week of the Section's stay at Verdun, there were many entries under the heading "collisions and derailments," for every man was pretty well tired out and most of the men were running on their nerves, with the result that accidents were of frequent occurrence. At times the rush was so great that in order to relieve the congestion, Chief Stevenson drove ambulances himself. There was rejoicing in camp, therefore, when at last the news came that the Section was to be relieved; and when, on September 14, we departed for a period of *repos*, the drivers no less than the soldiers of the division felt it was richly deserved. So we proceeded south to a peaceful little village in Jeanne d'Arc's country.

For their work at Verdun the following men received the *Croix de Guerre*: Robert J. Flynn, J. Clifford Hanna,

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Edward P. Townsend (second citation), R. H. Plow, Roy Stockwell, William A. Pearl, James M. White, Arthur M. Dallin, Richard H. Stout, William S. Holt, Harold E. Purdy, H. B. Day, Frank A. Farnham, R. W. Tapley, John Kreutzberg, and Philip S. Rice. A few days later the Section was cited by order of the Second Army for the work before Verdun during August and September, receiving the *Croix de Guerre* with the palm, this being the Section's fourth citation.

The American recruiting officers arrived at the Section September 13, 1917, on which date it ceased to be a volunteer organization and became a part of the United States Army.

ROY H. STOCKWELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New Bedford, Massachusetts; University of Kansas, '11, and the Harvard Law School; with Section One from November, 1916, to November, 1917; subsequently First Lieutenant in the U.S. Field Artillery in France.



## VI

### THE WORK AT VERDUN

*Paris, September 9, 1916*

I HAVE just returned from a visit to Section One. After seeing the extraordinary work that those boys are doing up there, I felt that I ought to write and tell you about it.

A good many of the Sections are now living under canvas and have often had difficulty in finding a suitable place to cook. So we have had built a kitchen on two wheels which is pulled along by a big two-ton White truck used for sitting cases, and the real reason of my visit was to leave one with Section One.

As it happens, they are situated at the present moment in the splendid Château de Billemont about four kilometres outside of Verdun, which up to a few weeks ago was the headquarters of some French officers. But the Germans, having got hold of the fact, shelled them out. It is an ideal place for our men.

The *poste de secours* to which they are attached is six kilometres the other side of Verdun; and since ten days before my arrival, and during my stay, the French have been doing incessant attacking and counter-attacking, the work of carrying the wounded has been practically continuous night and day.

Going to the *poste de secours* from the château, you pass through Verdun, and continue on a wide, level road for about one kilometre, and then you start up a very steep hill which continues, for five kilometres, right to the *poste de secours*. This road is very narrow and sufficiently dangerous from a driving point of view apart from the fact that it is shelled continuously day and night. Indeed, one of the duties of Townsend, Section Director, is to go up every morning at daybreak with a couple of men and fill up the holes which have been made during the hours of darkness, so that our cars will not fall into them.

The *poste* itself is only one hundred and fifty yards from Fort Saint-Michel, which, of course, accounts for the attention which that part of the country gets from the German artillery. Besides this, the whole valley and hill-sides are covered with French batteries, and the din at the top of the hill makes it impossible to talk in anything like an ordinary tone of voice.

The day driving is comparatively nothing. The part, however, for which they deserve all the praise that we can give them, is their work at night. Naturally no lights are allowed, and I have never seen a country that can produce darker nights than that district. Therefore let one try and imagine the difficulties of starting from the top of that hill with a car full of wounded and driving down a narrow hillside road in a blackness impenetrable for more than a yard. In fact if it were not for the light given by the firing of the guns and hand-grenades, the work would be well-nigh impossible; and what makes it more difficult still is that all the traffic starts at night when the ammunition is brought up to the various batteries and you are continually finding teams of horses almost on the top of the car before you have any idea of their presence. The round trip from the *poste de secours* to the hospital takes from two hours and a half to three hours, which averages a speed of about ten kilometres an hour. This will give an idea of how slowly one has to go.

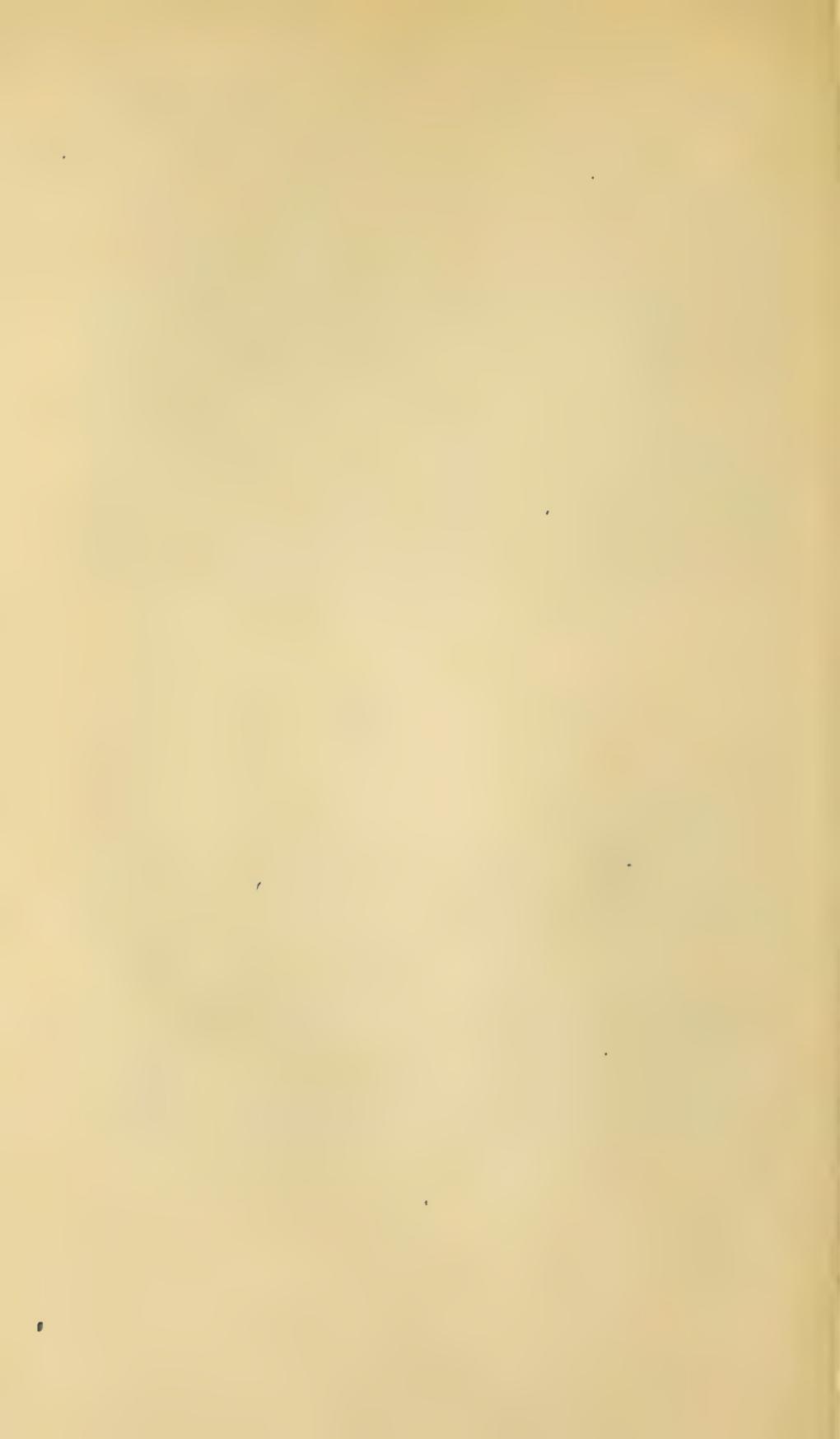
When I visited the Section, it had been doing this work for ten days before I got there, and yet there was not the slightest sign of fatigue or impatience among the men. I doubt, however, if any man in the Section had had, during that time, five hours' consecutive sleep. But far from shirking what they had to do, they were each and every one of them attempting more than their share. One night, for example, the *Médecin Chef*, who had charge of the *poste*, received word to prepare, on account of an unexpected attack, for an unusual number of wounded, and fearing that Section One might not be able to handle



THE GENTLE HAND OF THE SHELL!



WHAT WAS LEFT OF RYAN'S CAR AT CARRIÈRE SUD (VERDUN).



## SECTION ONE

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the situation alone, he called out as reserve a French Section which was in Verdun. No deeper offence than this could have been offered to poor Townsend, and every man in the American Section worked double that night. Needless to say that the French Section stayed where it was — in reserve. The idea that any situation was too big for our boys to handle was something not to be considered.

No matter how carefully a man drives at night, a number of accidents are bound to occur. In one night there were six. Of course these were minor accidents which could be repaired in a fairly short time. For instance, the White *camion* one night went into a ditch; two cars went head on into each other in the darkness; two more cars went into ditches and another fell into a shell-hole. Occasionally, of course, something occurred which would put a car out of commission three or four days, which means that the Section is that much short. If this sort of thing happens too often the authorities get impatient and threaten to replace the incomplete Section by a complete one, which, of course, about breaks the hearts of our fellows. So in the end we had cars in reserve for each Section to prevent this contingency ever happening.

The fact that every car has been hit makes no impression whatever on the men. I do not mean to say by this that they are reckless or foolhardy; on the contrary, they take all possible precautions. But when there is anything to be done, it is carried through without question or hesitation. Without exaggeration and without indulging in any blood-curdling stories, their work really impressed me as tremendously fine. Nothing that I can say can give an idea of how splendid these boys are.

JOHN H. McFADDEN, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania, '13; entered the Field Service in October, 1914; became treasurer of the organization in France; left the Service in 1917 to accept the post of Assistant Military Attaché at the American Embassy in Paris.

## VII

### NOTES FROM A DIARY

*Cappy, Somme, April 3, 1916*

I SPENT the night here at our advanced *poste*. The town is in ruins. There was no call for the trenches. The night was too clear. I woke about 4 A.M., thinking it was late because I heard the birds chirping, but found it was only the rats squeaking. The place is full of them; they walk over you at night. But nobody cares. The country is full of quail and hares, but no one bothers them and they are very tame.

*April 5*

THIS morning I watched the twenty-first "Suicide Club" practising hand-grenade throwing. Magoun and I noted where the things were thrown, with the idea of picking up a few *fusées* afterwards. Now and then they don't land right; so Magoun later picked up a couple of unexploded ones and offered me one. I declined and told him he had better let them alone. Just as we were arguing up came a file of men with shovels to bury the unfired grenades. When they saw Magoun with two in his hands they nearly had a fit; said he was crazy, and to prove it they told us to get in a near-by trench and they'd show us. So we all crawled in and an expert then recocked the little spring and threw the grenade, which went off with a bang that shook the trench! That evening we got a call to carry two *blessés* — one man with his face mutilated and another one with his feet blown off, who, oddly enough, had been "fishing" in the canal, by throwing hand-grenades in and then collecting the dead fish which floated up to the surface — a nice sporting thing to do! I must say I could n't feel very sorry for them. The same night we heard a heavy explosion close to our

## SECTION ONE

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farm and at first supposed that it was an incoming *obus*. But it really occurred in the back room of a café in which we eat, and a call came shortly after when we collected three more poor fellows hurt, and three dead, from fiddling with hand-grenades. I made a point to rub it into Magoun, calling his attention to the fact that that day, in our Sector, the French lost more men through their own carelessness than from Boche activity.

Roche, Magoun, Francklyn, and I now occupy the palatial apartment known as the "rat incubator." Some of the boys—Underhill, Baylies, and Paul—have erected a tent; as they were above us in the "Rat Hole," and their feet kept continually coming through the ceiling carrying plaster and splinters on to us, we are now more comfortable and clean, although Lewis, Lathrop, and Edwards are still up there. Townsend, White, and Woodworth have the best rooms in a really well-kept house, while Sponagle, Cunningham, and Winsor sleep next to the repair shop. The Lieutenant and the other Frenchmen attached to the Section sleep in the *bureau*, a nice little well-kept cottage also. The washing is done by a dear old woman who hates to leave and hopes, despite orders, to stay.

April 9

YESTERDAY I was "Chow," that is, the man who sets the table and waits on it. Each takes this duty by turns. But as we eat everything off the same plate, that is each one of us has but one plate, with the same fork and knife, there is no great strain upon the Admirable Crichton on duty. Although I got to bed at 3 A.M. I had to be up at 6.30 to set the table, being "Chow." It's a great life, though, which I would n't miss for worlds. We have a lot of fun on the side; play base-ball and a funny sort of adaptation of tennis with a hoop. At night we play roulette for centime stakes, occasionally fish for pike with a sort of trident made out of old Ford brake rods, and swim now and then when it is warm.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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May 22

WHITE and Campbell finally received their decorations to-day. An amusing incident occurred when the General took White, who had been told to stand out in front of the line, to be a mere onlooker and ordered him back. It had to be explained to him that this was the hero who was to be decorated! The General apologized, of course, but it got every one giggling and somewhat marred the solemnity of the occasion.

Cappy, June 1

BIG mortar batteries are arriving along the front. I saw several here, at Cappy, this afternoon, hidden near the cemetery. Nowadays even when a man gets killed he is not permitted to rest in peace. The Germans, trying to reach these new mortars, are bound to blow hell out of the cemetery.

### OPEN-AIR SLEEPING

Bayonvillers, June 2

I HAD fun with Francklyn this morning. It appears that he used Imbrie's *paillasse* last night, so that when Imbrie and I returned from Cappy, it was nowhere to be found. Francklyn was still asleep; so we carried him, bunk and all, out into the main street and placed him on the sidewalk. A large crowd immediately gathered, thinking he was a *blessé*, as he had nothing on but a blanket. He woke up just as a division staff was passing, and he certainly did make a quick jump for the yard with the blanket flapping like the tail of a kite behind his long, bare legs as he beat it.

Éclusier, June 13

THE other day a trooper fell off his horse and hit his head and they ordered me to carry the unconscious man to Villers-Bretonneux. The car was already full, but I piled him in and took him along to save argument. Of course I had a hideous time at the hospital at Villers, not having

## SECTION ONE

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a ticket for him. For an hour or so nobody could take him in — the usual red tape.

*June 14*

TO-DAY I had an interesting talk with a French Lieutenant. He says the Senegalese are awfully hard to handle. They won't stand shell-fire, but don't mind machine guns, so Frenchmen are put on either side of them — fifteen hundred Senegalese in each division. They have strings of Boche ears which they keep as trophies. On the other hand, the "Germs" always kill the black wounded and prisoners; so it is about fifty-fifty.

*June 20*

TO-DAY we saw the funeral of two aviators. It was quite impressive. One plane made the sign of the cross in the heavens above the grave.

*Châlons, June 23*

THE French kids are good little fellows. To-day one insisted I should have a rose in my buttonhole. Everywhere they give us flowers or candy. Another led me by the hand all around the village of Pont-Sainte-Maxence. Along the roads they always, girls and boys, click their heels together and give the military salute when we pass.

*Bar-le-Duc, June 25*

WE all went to bed at 7 A.M. and slept until Roche was awakened by something licking his face. Thinking it was one of the dogs, he just gave it a slap, and then the whole tent nearly collapsed! A stray cow had drifted in and tried to get acquainted! The riot that followed set all thought of further sleep at an end.

*Dugny, June 29*

ONE gets some astonishing directions when one is working at night in a new country. For instance, in going to Fort Tavannes, I was told to go along a certain road,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

until I passed two *smells* and then turn to the left. This referred to two piles of dead horses!

Verdun itself is pretty well shot to pieces. To-day I noticed a marble statue of Napoleon standing up in a hole above the street, which hole used to be a window in a house. The statue creates a rather impressive effect, as it looks out over the ruins and desolation toward the smoking, rocking hills.

Verdun, June 30

THE other day Bowman carried a Division Commander whose leg was cut off by a "77." He died in the car in the arms of his orderly, whose only words were, "It's too bad, too bad, to be killed by a mere '77' after all he had been through." Around here nothing under a "130" is regarded as amounting to much.

Dugny, July 1

WE have now three dogs attached to the Section. Besides "Vic," Magoun has picked up a little woolly one at Bayonvillers, while Bowman got a sad sort of mongrel pointer along the road to Bar-le-Duc. They are really more trouble than they are worth, as they continually get lost, while at night they come nosing into the men's blankets and get kicked out to the accompaniment of the usual yelping. Fleas, of course, also help. There are signs, I see, of another dog joining the squad here. It looks somewhat like a young hyena and is hanging around the cantonment. The tame crows and fox of the *cannion* drivers at Bayonvillers were amusing and could be caged, but these pups are continually escaping. What with our three tents, the zouave, "Lizzie," and the varied menagerie, we certainly are assuming the aspect of a traveling circus.

July 3

On the road into Verdun this morning, George End saw a man killed by the shock of a "210." The "Germs" were attacking Thiaumont again when a shell exploded just

## SECTION ONE

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beside the road, but without touching the man, who was killed simply by the shock.

*July 4*

IMBRIE is certainly a "scream." He remarked to-day that on going out on his run to the *poste* the road was O.K., but coming back he saw a fresh-killed horse. He said: "Now that's the sort of a thing that causes one to stop and reflect, but I didn't. I jammed down both the levers and did my reflecting at forty miles an hour." When Francklyn came in and said "to be careful" on a certain road, Imbrie, with his usual cheerfulness, remarked: "Careful! careful! Good Lord, how's anybody going to be careful? If we wanted to be careful, we should have been careful not to leave America."

### A GAS BARRAGE

*July 11*

MANY new dead horses along the road. The gas gets them, even the smallest whiff, and of course they have no masks. Speaking of gas reminds me that the Germans have been trying a new dodge — a sort of *tir de barrage* of "77" gas shells. These shells do not make much noise, but the gas spreads fast. The men who were caught by it all admit that they had taken off their masks for one reason or another. Some get sick at their stomachs and that forces them to take off their masks. It is not amusing to talk to men who don't know they are as good as dead! One really should have two masks, switch from one to the other in such a case, not breathing meantime. We all have had another one issued to us to-day.

*Triaucourt, July 30*

I HAVE been struck forcibly with the quiet, restrained and generally dignified behavior of the thousands of French soldiers camped about here. They wander through the handsome Poincaré château grounds and never disturb or injure anything. Bottles of wine left to cool in the spring are not touched.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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Billemont, near Verdun, August 21

WE have worked three days and three nights without any sleep except naps snatched in the cars. There was the usual comic scene with Baylies. Bowman was coming down the road when he found it blocked by a mass of dead and wounded horses, and men all tangled up with harness and wagons, and beside them one of our cars. It turned out to be Baylies who came running up to Bowman, exclaiming: "There's been an awful mess, Bob," and Bowman, perfectly unthinkingly, ejaculated, "Good Lord, what have you done now, Baylies?" Baylies was as sore as two sticks and growled, "Ah, where d' you get that stuff?" — his conventional answer to all gibes. The word "to Baylies" (French "*Bayliser*") has been standardized in Section One and is even spreading to the other Sections.

August 22

OUR greatest difficulty is to snatch a chance to sleep. So far, I have run every night since we've been here and I take naps at the *poste*. Five men get one night's sleep in three. I take off my hat to Roche, who can curl up anywhere and sleep peacefully. Last night, for example, he got a very bloody *brancard*, laid it under the bench where the *blessés* sit awaiting their turn to be patched up, and was sound asleep for four hours, while the Boches dropped "220" marmites around the *poste* and the groans of the wounded and chatter of the doctors and *brancardiers* kept up a continual disturbance. I've given up trying to sleep in the *abris* and so take a chance in the car outside. At least it is cool, though the air is foul with the odor of burned wood and rotting flesh.

### A CLOSE ONE — A CRAZY MAN

August 24

FRANCKLYN and Walker had a close call to-day. They were sitting in the front of the dugout reading a paper, when a "105" high explosive hit a tree not five yards

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from them. Pieces of the shell smashed into Francklyn's car and a shower of stones knocked the paper out of Walker's hand, while both men were thrown to the ground. Walker says all that he remembers was that some one seemed to snatch his paper away and knock him down at the same time, and he found himself crawling under his car, while Gyles made one long slide for the dugout entrance.

Verdun, August 25

I CARRIED a crazy man this morning. I found him wandering aimlessly around Verdun with a nasty hole in his head and tried to get him into the car; but he kept insisting he was too heavy. Finally, with the aid of a couple of soldiers we made him get aboard, though he murmured all the time, "*Je suis trop lourd, je suis trop lourd.*"

August 27

ON our last round to-day I carried a well-educated *poilu* about forty years of age who paid the American Ambulance many compliments. He said the soldiers of France would not forget the debt they owed us. This man had rifle bullets through both hands. He said he and another soldier "got the drop" on four Boches, who put up their rifles and yelled "*Kamerad*" in token of surrender. Then when the Frenchmen let down their sighted guns and beckoned them to come in, the Boches suddenly opened fire, wounding my man. But his partner and a machine-gun squad wiped out the four dirty curs before they could play any more of their foul tricks.

Vic White says the attack was only partially successful. He tells how one Boche was blown in three pieces high above the tree tops, when two of the pieces fell rapidly, but the third came drifting down slowly. It turned out to be the Boche's overcoat which had been ripped right off him by the explosion.

September 5

WE have now a big White truck which carries eighteen *assis* at a time — a great help, as it takes the place of

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more than three cars. When it toppled over the bank recently, there were seven French wounded sitting on one side and eight Boches on the other side. As the French were on the up side, they fell on the Boches who thought they were being attacked again! It was quite a job to get them all extricated. But apparently the mix-up did little harm to any one.

I carried a regular *pousse café* of a load this afternoon, — a Boche, an Englishman, a Senegalese, a Martiniquais, and a Frenchman, with an American driving.

*Verdun, September 7*

IT certainly is a satisfaction to note the contrast in the comments at the front concerning the American Ambulance from those to which one is forced to listen in Paris and other cities far from the lines. Here the soldiers can't praise us enough and the same is true of the officers and even of the priests. Many soldiers make it a point to salute the ambulances when they catch sight of the now familiar cars and uniform, because they have heard of the quickness and of the comfortable springs, — so different from the ordinary type of *camion* ambulance. "*Ah, c'est les volontaires! Bon!*" is a common phrase from a wounded man.

*September 9*

LAST night the commander of the 214th arrived with his regiment to relieve the 67th. We carried his body down this morning. He hadn't been at the front three hours before a shell got him.

*September 11*

SECTION ONE cited by order of the Army Corps. This puts us "top dog" of all the foreign Sections.

*La-Grange-aux-Bois, September 15*

TO-DAY the Section moved to the so-called front again, but in the Argonne this time — to this little place named Sainte-Ménchould, where Louis XVI was kept by the

## SECTION ONE

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revolutionists when he was caught. I saw the room in the town hall where he was prisoner.

*September 18*

TO-DAY I took three joy-riding officers into Sainte-Ménehould, where they stayed for a couple of hours and came back with two live chickens, which I was told to carry over to the car, just like "Jimes in the ply," because it looked "odd" for them to do it. However, it's amusing and I don't give a hang anyway, as we are here to help the French.

*September 27*

TISON is a great fellow, — only about six feet four inches high! When he, Culby, and Roche come into a café the whole conversation stops — everybody turns to see the giants. Pity we have n't still got Lathrop, for then there would be twenty-five feet of America represented by four men.

*September 30*

THE Salonikans left to-day and Francklyn took little "Vic" with him, which I think peeved Section One almost as much as the loss of the men. "Vic" had come to be considered our mascot and knew us all well. He would associate with no one else. Peter Avard picked him up at Vic-sur-Aisne about a year ago when he was only a few weeks old. The pup always enjoyed going up to the firing-line, riding cheerfully on the front seat or on the hood. The *poilus* and *brancardiers* all knew him, and petted and fed him. I believe "Vic" has been under fire more often than any one of us.

*November 27*

IT'S astonishing how everybody trusts everybody else out here. The Frenchmen give us money to buy them wine, tobacco, send telegrams and so on; and we leave all our belongings lying around loose and they never touch them. Of course it would n't be safe to do this with

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Senegalese, and on a highway where the troops are passing; but in the lines nobody touches any one else's things.

*Dombasle, April 13, 1917*

THIS afternoon General Herr, the commander of the Sixteenth Army Corps, inspected us. We were introduced to him individually and he said some very complimentary things, remarking that with the entry of America into the war "the combat would be shortened." Amen, I say.

*April 14*

FLYNN took Lidden to the Esnes *poste*. On their way, at "the bad corner," two shells dropped right close to them on the road, leaving several big holes in the car, and ripping the whole back out of Lidden's coat! Surely a remarkable escape, and "some" experience for a brand-new man on his first appearance on the firing-line. He had to remain at the *poste* for twenty-four hours, too!

### BERRY-AU-BAC — CRAONNE

*Muizon, April 17*

OUR orders came to roll at 7 P.M. and the whole Section went out. We handled the wounded from Berry-au-Bac and Craonne. There were heavy fighting and heavy losses. The receiving hospital, which is far to the rear, was so full that we had to wait four and five hours before the cars could be unloaded, and the wounded, naturally, suffered terribly.

*April 29*

THIS has been an interesting day. Word came that A. Piatt Andrew was to be decorated with the Legion of Honor. General Rageneau, General Nivelle's second, the head of the entire Automobile Service, and so many other "stripers" that it reminded one of Sing-Sing, turned up. The cars were formed in a hollow square in the château courtyard, and some two hundred troops, beside "us volunteers," fell in before them. Section One had been se-

THE FLAG OF SECTION ONE

The Section Flags were designed by Miss Theodora Laroque

DUNKERQUE  
BESIERS  
YPRIES

SSU 1



REIMS  
COTE 304  
ROUTE 44  
DOUAUMONT  
RAUDROMONT

VIC SUR AISNE  
ECLOUSIER  
VERDUN  
ARGONNE



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lected as the oldest Section in the Field Service, and Andrew's Section as well. The day was perfect. Mr. Andrew arrived and presented us with our new Section Flag, with the *croix* twice starred on it, and the names of the battles in which we had served: Dunkirk, Ypres, Verdun, Somme, Argonne, Aisne, Champagne — some eight or ten names. We were introduced to the General individually; and, after his speech, some of the older men were invited into the château to drink the health of France and the United States; Sponagle, Woodworth, Kurtz, Stockwell, and I were chosen. As it happened, the big guns were roaring straight ahead, behind, and all around us. In addition Boche aviators chose the moment to drop bombs on Muizon (our town) and the anti-aircraft batteries were going full tilt. One bomb fell into the Vesle right near our tent. We had been swimming in the stream but a short time before. It was a splendid *mise-en-scène* for such a military ceremony.

May 15

WE have organized two baseball teams, — the "Back and Forths" and the "Here and Theres." We have games every day, some of them most exciting. We have quite an audience of *poilus*, too. Of course, the playing is rather weird, but we get a lot of fun out of it.

May 23

WHILE we were playing baseball to-day, the Boches jumped on two saucisses. One of the observers came down in his parachute all right.

May 25

DISASTER! All are plunged in woe! They have spread manure over our baseball field!!

*Villers-Franqueux, May 29*

OUR *abris* here are amusingly named. One is "*le Métro*"; another is "*Ça me suffit*," which the men pronounce "*Sam Suphy*"; still another, "*Grotte des Coryphées*," etc.

## PROMOTION AND DUTIES

*Louvois, June 25*

OUR new cantonment is at this place, about fifteen kilometres southeast of Reims. Word has just come that I have been made *Chef*, which carries with it the equivalent of a First Lieutenancy in the French Army. I do hope I can hold down this job properly. It is a difficult one, as the men are so hard to keep disciplined when they are not getting much work. In a way, I am sorry to be taken off my car, and the life of a Section Chief is rather lonely, as one cannot play around with the men as much as before. On the other hand, one has a staff car of one's own, and a private officer's room with an orderly, and all that, so that one's creature comforts are fine.

*June 28*

I FIRED a man to-day. I hate this sort of thing, but it has to be done. I told him that we want up here only men who are both able and willing to work and that he seemed to be neither. "What have I done?" he asked. "It's what you have n't done," I replied — car never clean, breaking minor rules, shamming sickness when it is his turn to work, and so on. Everybody says I was perfectly right, and the boys all seem to approve the step.

*July 2*

THIS certainly is no soft job. I spend most of my time acting as a bumper between the Frenchmen in the Section and the boys who insist on "kidding" them. A Frenchman does not understand the American method of teasing and jollying, and gets raving mad, feeling insulted. And so I spend my time smoothing over alleged insults which were never meant.

*July 28*

I HAVE had an interesting talk with a French officer to whom I said something about not understanding why

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they were so generous in conferring *Croix de Guerre* on Americans, when lots of Frenchmen, who had actually been in the trenches, had not got the decoration. He replied that that had nothing to do with it; that these Frenchmen were forced to go into the war, some of them very much against their will, whereas the American Ambulance men, who had volunteered long before the United States entered the conflict, were each and every one a small but vital factor in bringing America into the struggle. Every time a man volunteered, he carried with him the hopes and sympathies of all his relatives and friends; and as the Ambulance grew, so did the pro-Ally sentiment grow, by leaps and bounds, in the United States.

*Haudainville, August 1*

REYMOND, our French Lieutenant, has had a funny argument with the *Médecin Chef* at Vaux, who insisted upon our carrying corpses of men killed right around the *poste*. We demurred, saying that it was the job of the mortuary wagons. Finally we compromised, the Lieutenant agreeing that if the corpses were still warm (!) we would carry them; but not any that had been dead a length of time. Rather gruesome, that.

*August 8*

PASSING along the Douaumont road the other day to get one of our men out of a ditch, I saw a boot lying on the way. I picked it up to throw it out of the road, and found a rotten leg still in it!

*August 9*

WE are in the midst of the heaviest work the Section ever had. The men and the cars are sights — plastered with mud from top to bottom. No fenders or side boxes left, nearly every car full of holes from *éclats*, and two of them with their entire sides blown out.

AN UNEXPECTED ATROCITY

August 16

FLYNN, who is driving No. 17, a car "presented by the Young Girls of San Francisco," — this is the name plate attached to it, — came back to-day announcing "another German atrocity!" "They've been knocking out 'the Young Girls of San Francisco,'" he said. And indeed, the whole side of his car was blown out.

Dallin is a funny chap. He likes to go up to the *postes*, even when off duty, and always asks to accompany the drivers. Just now he asked to go with Plow in the *camionnette*, although the road is being heavily bombarded. They certainly are a great bunch of boys! One could n't ask for a better crowd to lead.

The cars are all "marching." That is due to Pearl, who is working his head off. He keeps them going in spite of everything and has grown a scraggy beard and worn out his clothes in the doing. But they go. The boys, too, are fine. Hardly any sleep, food grabbed when they can get it, but they make good every time. They are a splendid bunch.

August 17

THIS morning Rice came in plastered with mud. It rains every day and the roads are quagmires. Rice, who has a well-developed sense of humor, remarked, "If I were the French, I'd give the Boches the damned country and then laugh at them!"

August 18

EVERY hour, as the men return from the *postes*, some story of lucky escapes and weird experiences is brought in. It is the biggest work the Section has ever done.

August 19

WE are to be relieved of the Haudromont *poste* by two French Sections! Some compliment, considering that only one half of Section One was working the *poste*!

## SECTION ONE

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August 22

THE attack has been an unexpectedly big success. The Sanitary Service worked finely. Everybody is praising the Americans.

August 24

THIS job certainly is instructive, if nothing else. I am becoming quite a doctor. I treat all my children with the medicine chest furnished by the Field Service. All the various dopes are described and numbered in a little catalogue. I catechize the patient, look wise, scratch my chin, and then, after a quick "once over" of the catalogue, hand him out the pills.

### WARM TIMES

Haudainville, August 31

RED DAY and I have had a tight squeeze in the staff car here at this place. The Germans were shelling the road with "220's" at half-a-minute intervals. So we got up as close as we dared, and then made a dash for it with the throttle wide open just after a shell had landed. We made it by the skin of our teeth, the next shell falling within thirty feet behind us, exactly on the road. The shock was terrific and our ears were dulled for an hour or more.

September 2

THE Boches shelled around the hospital all day to-day, and the smell is fierce, as they landed several of their shells in the graveyard. We, too, get shelled all day, and the *avions* drop bombs on us every clear night. For the first time I hear the men hoping for rain! Those boys, by the way have been wonderful. I never saw such work as they have been doing. It far exceeds anything the Section has done before, and I really don't see how they keep it up. Of course, I give them every bit of rest I can, and insist upon their being fed at all hours, both day and night. It is putting a crimp in the Section's books, but it's keeping them physically fit, anyway.

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September 6

LITTLE TAPLEY has an abcess; so, as he is pretty well done up, I sent him down to Paris for his *Croix* and gave him two days' permission to get his teeth fixed. An amusing thing occurred to him at Bar-le-Duc, where he was buying a little *Croix* ribbon, when an old *poilu*, noticing his extreme youth, came up and kissed him! You may imagine Tapley's feelings!

We are still hard at work, and the men are still doing wonderfully, considering the strain under which they have been for five weeks. Two of the cars have been completely destroyed by shells, and several others have been badly hit. But we have managed to patch them up with bits of board and odds and ends. They don't look like ambulances, but they run. The sides of one have simply been remade out of two canvas sleeping bags. Only two of the men have broken down under the nerve strain, but the others are getting pretty jumpy.

### FORDS AND PIGEONS

September 7

THE French Army now apparently classes Fords with carrier pigeons! At least I received this morning a letter from Captain Foix, Intelligence Officer of the 32d Army Corps, which reads as follows:

"I herewith send you two crates of pigeons for General Riberpray's Division, whose headquarters are in the Carrière Sud. It would be very kind of you to deliver them to him, on behalf of the 32d Army Corps, and thus do me a great service, for our cars cannot go so far."

I gave them to Ned Townsend, and told him to "fly" with them!

Regan pulled "a funny one" up at the *poste*. He had some pretty close calls getting there; so, as he had not confessed for some time, he asked the Lieutenant to let him see the Catholic priest. The Lieutenant found the priest; but the latter could n't understand English and Regan knew no French. Regan then asked the Lieutenant

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to translate his confession. But the Lieutenant, being a Catholic himself, refused, because, he said, it was n't the proper thing for a third party to hear a confession. Then the priest had a happy thought, and said he could absolve, or do whatever Regan's sins required, without understanding them. So Regan confessed in English, and got next to Heaven in good shape, although the priest did n't comprehend a word Regan said; and everybody seems to have been satisfied.

*September 11*

THE latest method to rehabilitate *blessés*, particularly *couchés*, is to be stopped by a cut road or a smashed-up *ravitaillement* train, while shells are coming in. Several of our men report remarkable resurrections of this kind. *Couchés* get out and run like deer, while *assis* make regular Annette Kellerman dives into *abris*. The other night Dix had to go up and down a line of dugouts shouting "*Oosong mes blessés? Oosong mes blessés?*" for half an hour, before he finally corralled his wounded and could proceed on his way. He relates that one of his *couchés* actually climbed off the top stretcher, all by himself, and succeeded in unfastening the back.

An amusing incident occurred while I was fixing things so that our cars could pass up to the door of the *abris*. A tall man in a blue cap called to me, "Why have n't you got on your helmet?" Thinking he was just a lieutenant like the rest of us, I shouted back, "How about yourself?" There was a laugh from one or two of the other "stripers" who were in the group with the tall man, and when I looked up to see what they were laughing at, I saw it was General Riberpray himself! — the Commander of the 128th Division, who only grinned and said nothing.

### THE DEATH OF GENERAL RIBERPRAY

*September 12*

GENERAL RIBERPRAY was killed yesterday morning. It could n't have been more than two hours after we met. It appears that he went down the line and a shell got him.

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At last, orders have come for us to move. We leave tomorrow for Vaucouleurs.

*September 14*

LAST night, the English Section invited the Lieutenant and me to dinner and were mighty nice to us. They said we "had set them a pace that they found it damned hard to follow." Pretty good for the usually undemonstrative Englishman.

### RESTING AFTER THE BATTLE

*Vaucouleurs, September 18*

WE are slowly getting over the recent work. Personally, I slept straight through for twenty-four hours. We have had wonderful luck in coming out of the offensive virtually intact, at least as far as men go, for not a single car in the whole outfit escaped without a hole. At all events, we seem to have made quite an impression, as the English Section working with us could not make the front *postes*, excepting in the daytime, whereas we made them day and night, on account of the lightness of the Fords, and the quick-wittedness of our drivers, who filled up shell-holes, with anything handy, as fast as they were made. Often, three or four times in one night, we would remake the road sufficiently for a Ford to pass over.

On our way here we passed many American troops in training, and one of the officers remarked that he "never had seen such a looking crew" — referring to us. To be sure, one half of the boys were wearing trousers and *poilu* shoes; some had on helmets, and all had a week or two's growth of beard. Every one was covered with mud, and the cars were all smashed up as to headlights, fenders, radiators, and also covered with mud and dozens of *éclat* holes. Altogether, it was a scaly-looking bunch of heroes.

*Allainville, September 28*

THE boys have lots of fun with the peasants. They dance with the girls, and jolly them in great style. We had a

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regular party last night. Several of the boys whistled on pieces of cardboard; others sang, and all had a fine time.

*October 4*

SECTION ONE has been cited "by order of the Army," and gets the Palm, "for its valiant conduct at Verdun in August, 1917, when everybody admired its audacity and zeal notwithstanding the continual bombardment of the roads by large asphyxiating shells; nor was there any interruption of its service, though suffering severe losses." The citation is signed by General Guillaumat.

*October 6*

DR. W. P. GARY, *Médecin Principal*, of the 96th Division, sends an official letter to our Lieutenant Reymond, in which he refers to our "brilliant personnel" and to our "magnificent go, endurance, courage, and devotion." We feel that we are going out of the old régime into the new with every reason to be proud of One's record. Personally, I cannot find words to express what I think of those wonderful boys. May the new Service live up to the old!

WILLIAM YORKE STEVENSON<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Philadelphia; University of Pennsylvania; served in Field Service from March, 1916, to December, 1916, and April, 1917, to the end of the Field Service, when he was commissioned First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service, and continued work with Section One; author of *At the Front in a Flivver* and *From Poilu to Yank*. (See Bibliography in the Appendices.)



## VIII

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

IT was with a glorious past that Section One of the American Field Service was taken over by the United States Army as Section 625 on the 30th of September, 1917, among the rolling fields and heavy woods of the Vosges at Aillianville, not so far from the home of Jeanne d'Arc.

Further, the Section was serving with the famous 69th Division composed of the 162d, 151st, and 129th regiments of Infantry and the 268th Artillery. The first two regiments as members of the 42d Division had been in the First Battle of the Marne at La Fère Champenoise.

The months of October, November, and December, 1917, the Section was to all purposes *en repos*, cantoned at Aillianville and Beaufrémont, the Division being engaged in teaching and training, around Neufchâteau, the 26th Division of the U.S. Army, the Yankee or New England Division, which during the ensuing year so magnificently earned its reputation of being among the very finest American troops.

On January 11, orders came to proceed to the sector of the lines in front of Toul, the Woëvre, and the Section moved with the troops which marched through the heavy snow. On successive nights the cantonments were Fruze, Saulxures, and Charmes la Côte, and on January 17, Andilly, its permanent cantonment, was reached. That night the Division went into the sector of trenches between Seicheprey and Limey, west of Pont-à-Mousson. On the 18th of January the First Moroccan Division, which had occupied this sector, and more to the left, was withdrawn and their place to the left of Seicheprey and Flirey was filled by the United States First Division. This date is notable in that it marks the occasion when American troops first took over what might be called their own sector of trenches.

During the next five months — for the 69th Division was in the lines here without a break for that period — Section 625 served the following *postes*: Xivray, Beaumont, Seicheprey, Poste Saint-Victor, Flirey, Bois de la Voisogne, Lironville, Limey, Saint-Jacques, Pont-de-Metz, Mamey, Poste Pouillot, Jonc Fontaine, and Poste Pétain in the Bois le Prêtre. During

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this period the evacuations were made to Minorville, Manoncourt, Rogéville, and Toul. As the U.S. First Division, and later the 26th Division which relieved it, took over more of the lines, the 69th slipped farther and farther to the right, until eventually its flank lay in the famous Bois le Prêtre in front of Pont-à-Mousson. On April 13, the Section cantonment was moved to Manonville.

It is true that this sector of the front had the reputation of being "quiet," and for the most part it upheld its character as such, but with the advent of the United States troops the whole neighboring line took on a more tense tone and *coups-de-main* for the purpose of taking prisoners, destroying positions, and to test opponents were more frequently indulged in. The whole sector had hibernated peacefully under the snows of winter until the first week in January, but it was then rudely aroused to the serious business of the New Year by an extensive and successful raid conducted by the Foreign Legion in front of Flirey, Seicheprey, and beyond the war-worn Bois de Remières. From the results of this raid it became apparent that the front lines on both sides were so lightly held that a *coup-de-main*, to become effective, must be conducted on a large scale and penetrate a considerable distance.

The work the Section was called on to do for the most part was not difficult, but when, as here, the trenches had been fixed for over three years, the shelling of roads, cross-roads, and *postes de secours*, especially those near a *Poste de Commandement*, was extremely accurate, and during a *coup-de-main* the evacuation of wounded was often conducted under heavy fire.

More than passing comment must be given the Boche attack of April 19 against the 102d Regiment of the U.S. 26th Division at Seicheprey, not only because this was the first engagement of any size participated in by United States troops, but because of the part Section 625 was called on to play. The attack was made at dawn, after a severe, but short preliminary bombardment by over 1000 picked Prussian *Sturmtruppen*, to the right of Seicheprey and near the place in the Bois de Jury where the United States and French troops joined. The line was pierced and the village entered from the side and rear. Very fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place during the ensuing day, and the enemy eventually retired toward their own lines occupying trenches in and near the Bois de Remières. Here they were pinned down by an enfilading cross-fire, but because of some misunderstanding or neglect, the four companies of the 102d Regiment designated for the counter-attack failed to take part with two companies of the French 162d Infantry who went over the top, and the enemy were allowed to

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regain their lines during the night without suffering further losses. Despite the unfaltering gallantry of the 102d Infantry, this engagement must be regarded as a Boche success, for although the casualties perhaps about balanced, the raiders gathered approximately 150 prisoners.

On June 4 the Section moved to Pagney-derrière-Barine near Toul. The morning of June 6 the Section started *en convoi* for Vitry-le-François, but received orders there to continue. At Esternay and Coulommiers further orders kept the Section *en route*, and three o'clock the following morning found it bivouacked in the market-place of Meaux, three hundred kilometres from its starting-point, with every car in good shape.

The civilians were rapidly evacuating Meaux, but the town was busy with the handling of American Marine wounded who were being brought in from the neighborhood of Bouresches and the Bois de Belleau. That day, by the way of Senlis, Creil, and Clermont, the Ferme la Quadre, near Nointel, was reached, where the Section rested and prepared itself, on June 8. It was apparent that a great Boche drive was pending, but the Section, though prepared, hardly expected to be ordered to the *alerte* at dawn on June 9 with the rumble of a tremendous barrage in its ears. It later proved to be a terrific attack extending between Montdidier and Noyon. Toward noon orders were received to proceed to Monchy-Humières behind Lassigny by the way of Arsy and Remy. The roads were jammed with the 69th Division going up in *caminos* and refugees and wounded streaming back, and as the Section convoy neared Monchy about four o'clock, heavy and light artillery and fragments of infantry passed it, hastening to take up positions in the rear. It was by no means a rout, but even the most inexperienced eye could see that the enemy was coming very fast and that the situation was uncertain at best. The cloud of battle smoke approached rapidly and the line of enemy *saucisses* advanced steadily, while those of the French, still in the air attached to their motor trucks, passed the convoy bound rearwards. As Monchy was reached, orders were given for the Section to turn in its tracks and go to Remy, there to await further instructions. Along the return route elements of the 69th Division were going up across the fields in skirmish order. Darkness came, and still no orders had been received concerning the establishing of *postes de secours*, or as to the location of any units to be served. Because of the unsettled situation, Lieutenant Stevenson determined to separate the Section. About half the cars were left at Remy to await further orders, and the remainder, under the direct supervision of Lieutenant Stevenson, went to the Sucrerie d'Apremont, a kilometre behind

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Gournay, where the Lieutenant, in Huston's car, went out to establish connection with the French infantry in front. By this distribution the instant availability of a part of the cars was assured. During the latter part of the night there was a pause in the attack, probably due to the bringing up of fresh enemy divisions, but before dawn it was renewed violently. At that time the lines ran through Gournay-sur-Aronde, which was held by a mere skirmish line of infantry, alone. During the next four days the struggle surged back and forth through Gournay, Ferme la Porte, Ferme de Loge, and Antheuil, the fortunes of battle changing so rapidly that it was impossible to be sure where the lines or *postes de secours* would be the next hour. Because of the continuous succession of attacks and counter-attacks, the cars served battalion and regimental *postes* in extremely advanced positions subjected to machine-gun and rifle fire. On the fourth day, after having been forced back approximately three kilometres since the morning of June 10, the Division counter-attacked heavily, driving the enemy back two kilometres and establishing the line more firmly. But for a week the fighting was over a very irregular front, entirely in the open wheat-fields without trenches, or even camouflage or concealment for the "75's"; the *postes* served by the Section were often unexpectedly retired or advanced and the difficulties and the anxieties of the work were doubled. It is difficult to designate the *postes* worked by the Section during this period, June 9 to 18, for temporary *postes* were several times established in open fields or roadside ditches, but the main ones are as follows: Montmartin, Le Moulin, two kilometres in advance, Sucrerie d'Apremont, the roadside behind Gournay, Le Ferme de Monchy, Le Ferme Beaumanoir, Monchy village, Château de Monchy, Baugy Château, Baugy village, and a roadside conduit in front of Baugy near the Compiègne-Montdidier highway. Evacuations were made to Le Fayel, Canly, Catenois, and Estrées-Saint-Denis. The Section cantonment was behind the church at Remy, the town being shelled frequently, and bombed severely every night by *avions*. On the 16th the Division started to withdraw from the lines, moving to the right as it did so, the Section being shifted to Venette on the edge of Compiègne, and *postes* established at Braisnes, Anelle, and Coudun. On June 20, the whole Division was out of the line, one regiment alone being held in active reserve, and the Section moved back to Jonquières, serving only one *poste*, at Lachelle.

The following twenty-four days of light work was welcome, not so much because of the rest it afforded the men, but because the Section felt what was still ahead of them and desired

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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to be ready and prepared in every conceivable way. The 69th Division had played the main part in stopping what proved to be the last Boche drive which met with any measure of success or perceptible advance. The Division had met the very middle of the drive, borne its full force, stopped it, and then hurled it back almost to the same position where it had first come to grips, inflicting almost unprecedented losses on the three divisions which opposed it. Of course its own losses were heavy, the Section on three successive days evacuating over 1500 men, together with another 150 from the divisions on either side. During the next three weeks the regiments were rested and recruited up, and were trained for attack with tanks, the nature of their work in the future becoming apparent.

The night of July 4, orders arrived, and the following afternoon the Section moved to the centre of the great forest just east of Compiègne, traversing the desolate streets of that city in the gathering dusk. Here a stop was made for two days near the Château de Franc Port, where the Section was quartered a week in 1916 on the way to the Aisne front. (Later the enemy armistice delegates were here to spend their first night within the allied lines.) Two days of solitude followed, unbroken except by *avion* bombing, but noon of the second day, July 17, brought directions, and at sundown the convoy took up its way through the aisles of the forest, reaching Pierrefonds before night. All extra equipment, a large part of the *atelier*, and the *bureau* were left in a house at the foot of that marvellous castle, and the first darkness saw the Section with faces turned toward the lines. Early dawn had been set with Mortefontaine, twelve kilometres away, as the rendezvous, but it was with the greatest difficulty that the order was carried out, for that night was filled with more muffled activity and strained anxiety than the world will ever see again. The road was jammed with every factor of a vast army, sensed around rather than seen, but revealed momentarily in the flashes; *camions*, wagons, caissons, machine-gun carts, staff cars, motor-cycles, artillery, little and big tanks, armored cars, cavalry with their towering lances, bicycle detachments, and always the plodding infantry in two endless columns following the ditches on either side. Steadily and ceaselessly this stream poured forward through the black, no singing, little talking, few orders; the tramp of feet in the mud, the rattle of wheels, the throbbing of motors, the staccato explosions of the motor-cycles, and the ponderous clanking of tanks; an irresistible tide of manhood, *poilus* and doughboys, shoulder to shoulder straining toward the future. Surely the night of July 17-18 should be as memorable and glorious forever as the dawn of July 18, the hour when the



A MUDDY ROAD AND AN EXPOSED "POSTE" NEAR THE LINES



## SECTION ONE

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forces of liberty commenced their overwhelming attacks, never ceasing till the final victorious peace was attained.

At the first break of day the Section was all assembled at Mortefontaine in time to see the attack beyond. Again the Section was serving in the famous *20<sup>e</sup> Corps d'Armée*, the first it had ever been attached to, and this time it was in Mangin's magnificent Tenth Army. As the battle progressed it turned as a pivot till, instead of facing east, as on the first day, on August 2, when Soissons fell before it, it faced north on its whole front. This manoeuvre required great skill of generalship and all the brains and force in personnel of a truly veteran organization.

July 19 again only a few cars were used, and these carried Americans, Moroccans, and soldiers of the Legion as well as their own Division's wounded. No definite *postes* were established, the wounded being picked up at widely scattered places.

The first *postes de secours* were established on July 20, in a roadside ditch near the ruins of the Raperie at a cross-road on the route from Cutry to Saconin, and on the 21st, in the village of Missy-aux-Bois. Then the Section commenced real work, for the runs from these places were constant, the evacuations all being made to Pierrefonds, twenty-five-odd kilometres to the rear, over rough, narrow roads at all hours solid with traffic. The Missy *poste* was in the cellar of the château on the northern edge of the town and adequately answered the purpose, being maintained until August 2. But the Raperie *poste*, which lay in the middle of some threescore "75's" in the open field, and within a stone's throw of an important cross-road, was different. It almost immediately became untenable as a place to retain wounded for more than a moment. On July 21, it was moved over a kilometre forward to a quarry-hole in the hillside above the village of Saconin, from which the enemy had just been driven. The mouth of the cave, labelled "Minenwerfer Hohle," faced toward the lines across the narrow valley, and was subject to a constant and severe fire, directed not only at the mouth of the *poste*, but the road in front, and the loop of the road behind and above. All *postes*, with the exception of the one at Missy-aux-Bois, were reached by one road which ran down the hill past the Minenwerfer Hohle, wound down through the little valley, through the village of Saconin, curled up the opposite side through the hamlet of Breuil, and up over the crest to the great covered quarry beyond. The evacuations which were made over this route were very numerous, as may be assumed from the fact that all the cars, including the *camionnette* and often the White truck, were working night and day steadily until the fall of Soissons on August 2, the men

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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snatching minutes of sleep rather than hours. Missy was reached by the route through Saint-Pierre-Aigle and Dommiers to the Croix de Fer on the Paris-Soissons highway, from which a small road led diagonally back to Missy.

On July 20, the Section cantonment moved into the town of Cœuvres, from which on July 21 it was shifted to an open field behind Dommiers, where the kitchen was placed in the lee of a destroyed tank and the men slept under the cars or in shell-craters, when they were fortunate enough to have an opportunity. Before this site could be made available, a number of bodies had to be removed and buried.

The night of the 22d a remarkable array of Scotch regiments, composing the 15th Division, entered the lines on the right; among them were some of the recognized élite of the British Army — the Black Watch, the Gordons, the Seaforths, the Camerons, and the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders. These troops went up to the skirling of the pipes, every man immaculate and the acme of military precision and orderliness; and after a week of terrific attacking, which terminated in the triumphant storming of Buzancy, came out the same way, unruffled and undisturbed, notwithstanding extreme losses, every man shaved and perfect in attire and equipment. The Section was privileged in evacuating many — too many — of them from Missy and temporary *postes* beyond Chaudun in the neighborhood of Ploisy and Berzy-le-Sec.

A *poste* in the village of Ploisy was established July 23. This was veritably among the French machine guns, for the lines — if such they could be termed, being merely an irregular chain of isolated and almost unrelated positions and nests — ran barely beyond the end of the village. The cars were allowed to arrive only after dark and were ordered to depart before dawn; but often dire necessity ruled and the runs were made by day as well. So insecure and vague were the lines here that the Division *aumonier* going up by day in one of the cars and alighting at Ploisy, walked unwarned into the enemies' positions a few hundred feet beyond and was made a prisoner.

Soissons fell on August 2, and the city was completely cleared to the river-bank in short order, with the exception of one tremendously strong outpost at the "hydraulic pump," where the Aisne loops in passing through. This was attacked and wiped out the afternoon of August 9 after severe concentrated artillery preparation, the cars being taken to within almost a stone's throw of the scene in the city streets before the barrage started, in order to be instantly available for the wounded.

On August 3 new *postes* were established at Billy-sur-Aisne, Carrière l'Évêque, the châteaux at Belleu and Septmonts,

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Noyant, Vignolles, and on August 7 one at the enormous hospital near the railroad station in Soissons. There were other temporary battalion and advanced *postes* at various places, a cave on the plateau beyond Carrière l'Évêque and two in Soissons, one near the Place de la République and one in a house on the east edge of the city.

The Section at dawn of July 30 had been shelled out of its cantonment in the field behind Dommiers and was fortunate in being able to move back to the vicinity of the château in Cœuvres without damage. On August 5, with the advance of the troops, it took up quarters in the village of Ploisy, the kitchen and *atelier* being set up next to the château and the men and cars being scattered in various places, a precaution made necessary by the continual shelling of the town itself and the numerous batteries surrounding it. The work of evacuation had been especially arduous because of the length of the runs necessary to reach the hospitals. From July 18 to 25, all evacuations were made to Pierrefonds over twenty kilometres by road from Cœuvres alone; on that day a small *ambulance* was opened at the château in Cœuvres, where gassed men, *assis*, and all slightly wounded could be left. About August 5 the evacuations of *couchés* and seriously wounded were changed to the hospital at Villers-Cotterets, more than twenty-five kilometres from Ploisy; but on August 14, the Section labors were greatly lessened by orders to evacuate all to a *triage* hospital situated in a great cave in Vierzy, barely ten kilometres from Soissons itself.

About this time one of the cars was detached to accompany the 162d Regiment, which was withdrawn from the lines and moved over to the left, crossing the Aisne at Vic-sur-Aisne and advancing into an attack as support to another division. It returned to its former place in less than a week.

Source of indignation was the lax and inexcusable manner in which the burying of the American dead was conducted. Despite the fact that the 1st Division had been withdrawn from the lines on July 23, a great many of their dead lay unburied, kilometres behind the lines, for a full month. The French burying-parties, made up of territorials, were instructed that the Americans desired to bury their own dead, but despite this, for sanitary reasons, were forced hastily to cover many bodies. They could not have fallen later than July 22, for the 1st Division had been relieved then and no United States troops remained in this part of the line. The Section was working desperately at the time, and the men and time were not available to give these unfortunates a decent burial. The detachment of the 1st Division, stationed at Mortefontaine, for the purpose

of properly marking and of mapping the locality of graves, was immediately notified. The reply Sergeant Day received when letting them know of these conditions was, "Well, that's a pretty hot place yet, and what's the use of risking your life for a dead man?" These bodies remained untouched till finally necessity demanded action, so on the 20th of August they were decently buried by friendly hands where they fell fighting fiercely in the Greatest Cause. The French had more than they could do to take care of their own victims, and to put away the Boches, and the Section to a man writhed in unavailing indignation that their own country's dead should be left to the care of hurried foreign hands without cause or even excuse. A contrast to this was the Scotch. Future generations will see orderly, neat, clean little cemeteries, which were erected and completed to their last tenant twenty-four hours after the Scotch were withdrawn from the lines.

The morning of August 28, the attack to cross the river was commenced and a few hours later the immediate suburbs of the city beyond, including strongholds at the *distillerie*, the *briqueterie*, and the *abattoir* were cleared and a tiny pontoon bridge laid. The first vehicle of any kind to cross the Aisne at Soissons or to the right was one of the Section cars driven by Irving Moses. The new *postes de secours* were all on the far bank along the fringe of the city, the *briqueterie*, almost immediately made utterly untenable, the *abattoir*, and the Abbey Saint-Médard, the last being the resting-place of ancient kings of France. Attack followed attack, the flats beyond the river were cleared foot by foot, but the Boches still retained the dominating heights along the edge of the plateau, and every inch of every road was open to machine-gun-fire. Toward the last days of August, the Division resumed its heavy attacks, crossed the Aisne, cleared the suburbs of the city on the other side and numerous positions in the valley, stormed up the heights to the plateau, captured Crouy, and put the enemy to open flight across the plateau top, pursuing them beyond Bucy-le-Long, Vregny, and Pont Rouge toward Vauxaillon, being relieved on September 7 at Moulin de Laffaux. The achievements of the 69th Division during these fifty-one successive days of terrible struggle have been recognized as one of the most heroic annals of the French Army.

The order for convoy to Nancy came September 15 and the Section proceeded to its destination by easy stages, stopping the first night at Châlons-sur-Marne in the market-place, and the second at Vaucouleurs, reaching Vandœuvre, its billet on the edge of Nancy, the afternoon of September 17. *En route* the men had been given an opportunity for a hurried glance at the

## SECTION ONE

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Bois de Belleau, where in those dark days of early June the Marines had thrilled the world; and a stop for lunch had been made in Château-Thierry, a name which will roll down the centuries as more American than French.

The three days at Vandœuvre were spent in overhauling the cars and re-equipping, and September 22 found the Section quartered in the grounds of the field hospital at Millery on the right bank of the Moselle, having stopped for two days at Frouard while the Division slowly took over the lines to the right of Pont-à-Mousson, part of which was occupied by the 82d U.S. Division. On the 25th, a company of the 162d Regiment, and a company of the 29th Battalion of Senegalese, joined with the 60th U.S. Infantry Regiment in an unsuccessful attack along the right bank of the Moselle, in front of Pont-à-Mousson. The objectives were reached first by the United States troops, but they were forced to fall back sooner than were the French, who held on until it was obvious that their position could not be retained without entailing too expensive losses. During the attack the Section served a *poste* in the demolished site of a hospital beyond Pont-à-Mousson, and during the next few weeks had cars stationed at Sainte-Geneviève, Loisy, and Landremont, from which various advanced *postes* were worked. On October 10 the 92d Division of United States negro troops relieved the 69th Division, which nevertheless left its artillery for additional support until further protection could be afforded. The Section during the relief had the additional work of evacuating many footsore and sick soldiers of the 92d Division.

Again the Section spent a few days in Vandœuvre and on October 14, moved to Eulmont, the Division shifting along the lines to the right. The sector here was very quiet, and the Section for some three weeks, as well as serving the 69th Division, took care of the 165th Division, which also belongs to the 32d Corps. Two more battalions of Senegalese were added to the Division. Again the Section prepared itself to take part in a tremendous attack. This time it was apparent, from military preparations, that the attack was to be upon a gigantic scale, dwarfing everything that the war had hitherto known; but the glorious news of the signing of the Armistice intervened at the last minute, and the old Section flag was cheated of another name to add to the immortal ones it already bore! Dunkirk, Ypres, Nieuport, Vic-sur-Aisne, Cappy-sur-Somme, Verdun, Côte 304, Reims, Route 44, Houdromont, Douaumont, Seicheprey, Monchy, Soissons, Crouy, and Pont-à-Mousson.

Here starts another phase in the history of Section Six-Twenty-Five. As an American unit in the war, dating as a

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

Section from the first days of 1915, and with an origin from almost the first hours of the war, it rightfully claims the distinction of being the oldest, the veteran organization, of America in the World War. The records show that from January, 1915, to the signing of the Armistice, it had evacuated well over 56,000 men. But now it turned willing hands to aid in the French Army of Occupation, the Tenth Army commanded by General Mangin.

On the 17th day of November the Section crossed the lines between Abaucourt and Jallaucourt and slowly travelled with the Division through Lorraine into Germany. Stops of several days were made at Tincy, Suisse, Gesslingen, Hellingen, and Sulzbach, and finally on December 9, Neunkirchen was reached, where the Section remained comfortably quartered for several weeks. About the only incident worthy of comment during this period was the attempt by hidden snipers to shoot Orrie Lovell and Weld while transporting sick to the hospital. In the early part of January, the 69th Division was split up, the various regiments returning to their old Corps, which fact left the Section unattached and with no services to render. On January 20, orders came to report to the *parc* at Mayence and the 130-kilometre convoy was made in good shape. Billed on the edge of Mayence in the town of Bretzenheim, the Section waited for orders to report to the U.S. Army Ambulance Service Base Camp for demobilization and return to the United States. A fitting climax to the four years' service came on the receipt of the 5th Citation à l'ordre de l'armée, which carried with it the privilege of wearing the *Croix de Guerre Fourragère*, for the splendid work of the past summer near Compiègne and around Soissons.

EDWARD A. G. WYLIE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Yale; in S.S.U. 1, and Six-Twenty-Five during 1917-19. The above is from a privately printed *History of Section 625*.





IN MEMORIAM

PERCY LEO AVARD  
ROGER MARIE LOUIS BALBIANI  
FRANK LEAMAN BAYLIES  
TINGLE WOODS CULBERTSON  
ROGER SHERMAN DIX, JUNIOR  
MEREDITH LOVELAND DOWD  
PAUL BORDA KURTZ  
HOWARD BURCHARD LINES  
GEORGE FREDERICK NORTON  
WILLIAM CLARKSON POTTER  
MALCOLM TROOP ROBERTSON  
STUART MITCHELL STEPHEN TYSON  
WILLIAM NOBLE WALLACE  
BENJAMIN RUSSELL WOODWORTH





Scallop shell  
America's old home seashell

Scallop shell  
America's old home seashell

C. L. R., Baldridge April 10

## *Section Two*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. JAMES R. McCONNELL
- II. LESLIE BUSWELL
- III. CARLYLE H. HOLT
- IV. HENRY SHEAHAN
- V. FRANK HOYT GAILOR
- VI. EDWARD NICHOLAS SECCOMBE
- VII. CHARLES BAIRD, JR.
- VIII. JOHN R. FISHER
- IX. WILLIAM H. C. WALKER
- X. JOHN E. BOIT
- XI. HENRY D. M. SHERRERD
- XII. HARMON 'B. CRAIG
- XIII. EWEN MACINTYRE, JR.
- XIV. EDWARD NICHOLAS SECCOMBE

## SUMMARY

SECTION Two left Paris for Vittel, the headquarters of the French Army of the East, in the middle of April, 1915. It was almost immediately assigned to service in the region of Bois le Prêtre, being quartered first at Dieulouard, then at Pont-à-Mousson. It remained in this sector, which at that time was fairly active, for nearly ten months. In February of 1916, when the great battle of Verdun was imminent, it was moved to that sector, where it remained for more than a year and a half. It was first stationed in the hospital grounds at Le Petit Monthairon. In March the Section was attached to the rapidly growing hospital at Vadelaincourt; in June it moved for a month to Bar-le-Duc; on June 27th it returned to Le Petit Monthairon; on September 2 to Rampont, where it remained until November 8, leaving on that date for Ville-sur-Coussances; after two months of activity at this point, the Section was sent for *repos* to Glorieux near Verdun on January 10, 1917. On the 19th of the month the entire Section started for La Grange-aux-Bois; thence to Dombasle-en-Argonne on the 25th of June, and on July 30 for *repos* to Nançois-le-Grand. On August 16 the Section went on a three days' *repos* to Sommaisne. This was followed by a brief stay at Souhesme. It was on September 26 at Sivry-la-Perche that the Section enlisted in the American Army as Section Six-Twenty-Six.



## Section Two

Yet sought they neither recompense nor praise,  
Nor to be mentioned in another breath  
Than their blue-coated comrades whose great days  
It was their pride to share, ay! share even to death.  
Nay, rather, France, to you they rendered thanks  
(Seeing they came for honor, not for gain),  
Who, opening to them your glorious ranks,  
Gave them that grand occasion to excel,  
That chance to live the life most free from stain  
And that rare privilege of dying well.

ALAN SEEGER

(From a poem written by him in memory of American Volunteers fallen for France, upon the occasion of a memorial service held before the Lafayette-Washington statue in Paris, May 30, 1916)

### I

#### PONT-À-MOUSSON — 1915

*Pont-à-Mousson, August 1915*

IN August, 1915, we were quartered in a building which had not been occupied since August, 1914. There were countless rooms already furnished, while those on the first floor had been so cleaned up that the Section, which consisted of twenty-four men, had "all the comforts of home." There was a large mess-hall, kitchen, writing-room, library, general office, dormitory, and a good generous vaulted cellar of easy access. This last adjunct was important, for the town was one of the most frequently bombarded places in the line, and very often big shells that wreck a house at one shot made it advisable to take to the *cave*. The *atelier* of the *armurier* with its collection of tools and fixtures, now served as a perfect automobile repair shop. We had also running water, and, at first, en-

joyed both gas and electric lights; but shells eventually put both systems out of commission. Naturally the telephone line got clipped every few days, but was quickly repaired. Behind the headquarters was a gem of a garden containing several species of roses, and, as fortune would have it, new wicker chairs. At first all this seemed too good to be true; we could not realize that such an amazing combination of comforts could exist in the war zone, and still less could we realize it when we looked down the street and saw the German trenches in full view on the crest of a hill fourteen hundred yards distant, where at night rifle flashes were seen. To the volunteers who had hibernated and drudged along at Beauvais some thirty-five kilometres behind the line until April, 1915, it was a realization of hopes beyond belief.

The men in the Section had been billeted in Dieulouard, eight kilometres below, at houses where they slept when not on night duty; but when the French Section was ordered away, a number of the men elected to move up to Pont-à-Mousson and were given excellent quarters in the various vacated residences of the town. Why, instead of just rooms they had suites, and the commander had an apartment in the show place of the town!

### THE DAILY SERVICE

THE regular daily service was arduous enough in itself, for one was either on duty or on call all of the time. Then there were periods following an attack when the men rested neither day nor night, when one got food only in snatches, and frequently days at a time would pass when one was on such continuous service that there was never a chance to undress. Then there was the other aspect, the ever-present danger of being killed or wounded that one is under at the front, for Section Two worked and lived in a heavily shelled area.

In spite of the danger, the American *ambulanciers* rendered their service with fidelity at any and all times. A French captain once remarked that, no matter how much



SHELLS BREAKING ON THE CÔTE DE MOUSSON



WATCHING AN AEROPLANE DUEL IN PONT-À-MOUSSON



## SECTION TWO

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the town was being shelled, our little field ambulances could be seen slipping down the streets, past corners, or across the square on their way to and from the *postes de secours* back of the trenches. I remember one day that was especially a test of the men. The town was being shelled, and it happened that at the same time there were many calls for cars. The Germans were paying particular attention to the immediate surroundings of our headquarters, and the shells were not falling according to any time-table known to us. A call came in, and the "next man" was handed his orders. He waited until a shell burst and then made a run for it. Several cars had been out on calls and were due to return. There was no way of giving them a warning. We heard the purr of a motor, and almost immediately the sing of a shell very close to us. There was an instant of anxiety, an explosion, and then we were relieved to see the car draw up in line, the driver switch off his motor and run for our entrance, holding his order card in front of him as he ran, and just as he entered another shell hit near by. It reminded me strongly of a scene in a "ten-twenty-thirty" martial play. All the hero needed was some fuller's earth to pat off his shoulders when he came inside.

### THE ROUTINE

It is difficult to take any one day's work and describe it in the attempt to give an adequate picture of the routine of the Section, for with us all days were so different.

Six-thirty is the time for bread and coffee, and the long table in the flag-decorated mess-room begins to fill. Mignot, our comrade orderly, is rushing to and fro placing bowls in front of those arriving, and practising on each the few English expressions he has picked up by association with us. Two men of the Section enter who look very tired. They throw their caps or fatigue hats on to a side table and call for Mignot. They have been on all-night service at a hamlet where the most active *postes de secours* are located.

"Much doing last night?" asks one of the crowd at the table.

"Not much. Had only sixteen altogether."

"Anything stirring?"

"Yes; Fritz eased in a few shrapnels about 5.30, but did n't hurt any one. You know the last house down on the right-hand side? Well, they smeared that with a shell during the night."

"By the way," continues the man in from night service, addressing himself to one across the table, "Canot, the artilleryman, was looking for you. Says he's got a ring for you made out of a Boche fuse-cap, and wants to know if you want a Geneva or Lorraine cross engraved on it."

The men in the Section leave the room one by one to take up their various duties. There are some whose duty it is to stay in reserve, and these go out to work on their cars. Others [are on *bureau* service, and they remain within call of the telephone. Two leave for the town eight kilometres below, where their job is to evacuate from the two hospitals where the wounded have been carried down the day and night before.

### FRIENDS AMONG THE FRENCHMEN

IN front of four or five of the low masonry houses a Red Cross flag is hung, designating the *postes de secours* where the wounded are bandaged and given to the ambulances. An American car is backed up in front of one, and the khaki-clad driver is the centre of interest for a group of soldiers. Some he knows well, and he is carrying on a cheerful conversation with them. It is surprising what a number of French soldiers speak English; and there are hundreds who have lived in England and in the States. Some are even American citizens who have returned to fight for *la belle France*, their mother-country. I have met waiters from the Café Lafayette, *chefs* from Fifth Avenue hotels, men who worked in New York and Chicago banks, in commission houses, who own farms in

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the West, and some who had taken up their residence in American cities to live on their incomes. It seems very funny to be greeted with a "Hello there, old scout!" by French soldiers.

"Well, when did you come over?" asks the driver.

"In August. Been through the whole thing."

"Where were you in the States?"

"New York; and I am going back there when it is over. Got to beat it now. So long. See you later."

A few companies of soldiers go leisurely past on their way up to the trenches, and nearly every man has something to say to the American driver. Five out of ten will point to the ambulance and cry out with questionable but certainly cheerful enough humor, "Save a place for me to-morrow," or, "Be sure and give me a quick ride!" Others yell our greetings, or air their knowledge of English. "*Camarade américain*," said in a very sincere tone and followed by a grip of the hand, has a very warm friendship about it. Yes, you make good friends that way. Working along together in this war brought men very close. You found some delightful chaps, and then . . . well, sometimes you realized you had not seen a certain one for a week or so, and you inquire after him from a man in his company.

"Where is Bosker, or Busker? — I don't know how you pronounce it. You know, tall fellow with corporal's *galons* who was always talking about what a good time he was going to have when he got back to Paris."

"He got killed in the attack two nights ago — *pauvre gars*," is the answer. . . .

### NIGHT DUTY AND AN ADDED SECTOR

A KILOMETRE up the climbing winding road was a lone *poste de secours* in the woods just off the highway. The approach and the place itself were often shelled. There were times when the drivers were under a seriously heavy fire on night duty; times when trees were shattered and fallen across the road and huge craters made in the soft

earth of the adjacent fields. A kilometre beyond was another point of call, and from there one could look directly into one of the most fought-over sections of ground in the long line from the sea to Belfort. It is a bit of land that before the war was covered with a magnificent forest. Now it is a wilderness whose desolation is beyond description.

Section Two performed its duties so well that the work of an adjacent division was given to it, and the little cars began rolling past the last-mentioned *poste de secours* over to the exposed plain beyond and into the zone of its newly-acquired activities. The American cars literally infested the roads in the day. They buzzed along on calls to the *postes*, returned from evacuations, and kept so busy trying to accelerate the work that a casual observer might have imagined that a whole division had been annihilated overnight. There are times when men die in the ambulances before they reach the hospitals, and I believe nearly every driver in the Section has had at least one distressing experience of that sort. Early one morning there was an urgent call for a single wounded. The man's comrades gathered around the little car to bid their friend good-bye. He was terribly wounded and going fast. "See," said one of them to the man on the stretcher, "you are going in an American car. You will have a good trip, old fellow, and get well soon. Good-bye and good luck!" They forced a certain cheerfulness, but their voices were low and dry, for they saw death creeping into the face of their comrade. The driver took his seat and was starting when he was asked to wait. "Something for him," they said. When the car arrived at the hospital, the man was dead. He was cold and must have died at the start of the trip. The driver regretted the delay in leaving. Why had they asked him to wait? Then he saw that the ambulance was covered with sprigs of lilac and little yellow field flowers. The men knew that the car would serve as a hearse.

Americans have a faculty of adapting themselves to any service they may be called upon to perform, and

## SECTION TWO

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many times we undertook on our own initiative various missions that were not in strict accord with our military duties. For instance, after a bombardment, we very often transported dead civilians. During one bombardment a considerable number of women and children were killed. A couple of the American ambulances were on the spot immediately after, and the men were silently going about their sad work. The little children who were accustomed to cry out to us as we passed, gathered around holding to their mothers' trembling hands. They said, "*Américains*," when they saw the khaki uniforms; but on this occasion their tone was hushed and sad instead of loud and joyous, and had a surprised note, as if they had not expected to see the Americans at such a task.

### CURIOSITY AND PRUDENCE

IT took us a long time to learn the value of prudence. At first during the bombardments we would rush to the street as soon as a shell landed and look to see what damage had been done. Then, when some *éclats* had sizzed uncomfortably close to our persons, we became a little more discreet and waited awhile before venturing out. But experience finally discounted the popularity of orchestra seats during an exhibition in which shells larger than "77's" appear.

The men did what was asked and gladly, for there was no work more worth while than helping in some way, no matter what, this noblest of all causes. One did not look for thanks,—there was reward enough in the satisfaction the work gave; but the French did not let it stop at that. The men from the trenches were surprised that we had voluntarily undertaken such a hazardous occupation, and expressed their appreciation and gratitude with almost embarrassing frequency. "You render a great service," said the officers, and those of highest rank called to offer thanks in the name of France. It is good to feel that one's endeavors are appreciated, and encouraging to hear the words of praise; but when, at the end of an

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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evacuation, one drew a stretcher from the car, and the poor wounded man lying upon it, who had never allowed a groan to escape during a ride that must have been painful, with an effort holds out his hand, grasps yours, and, forcing a smile, murmurs, "*Merci*," — that is what urged you to hurry back for other wounded, to be glad that there was a risk to one's self in helping them, and to feel grateful that you have had the opportunity to serve the brave French people in their sublime struggle.

### EXTRACTS FROM McCONNELL'S JOURNAL

*October 26, 1915*

THE head of the Sanitary Service of the French Government, accompanied by three generals, made a tour of inspection of all the units in this sector to-day.

*November 14*

WE had the first snow of the season to-day. All the morning it snowed and covered the fields and trees with a thick coating of white. In the roads it melted and they became stretches of yellow slush.

*November 16*

WE received a telephone message in the morning asking us to go to the *mairie* to meet a high official. Four of us went over. A number of large cars were drawn up in the *Place*. One bore the flag of the President of France. We were to meet Poincaré. We formed a line inside the sandbag barricaded arcade. The President and his entourage passed. He stopped in front of us. "One finds you everywhere," he said; "you are indeed devoted." Then he shook hands with each of us and passed on. We wandered on down the arcade to watch the party go down into the shelled area of the town. A sentry standing near us entered into conversation. He addressed himself to Pottle. "Did he shake hands with you?" he asked. "Oh, yes," replied Pottle, who had taken the whole thing as a matter of course. "*Bon Dieu!*" said the sentry, "he is n't a bit proud, is he?"

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November 25

THANKSGIVING — and we celebrated it in the American style. We had purchased and guarded the turkeys, and they were prime. One of our men did wonders with the army food, and it is doubtful if any finer Thanksgiving dinner was eaten any place in the world than the one we enjoyed to-day, only two thousand yards from the Huns.

November 30

THE writer, with two others of the Section, was crossing the *Place* after dark. As we passed the breach in the sandbag barricaded roads we were lighted up by the yellow glare coming from the shops next to the *mairie*. The sentry there on duty saw us. "Pass along, my children, and good luck to you; you are more devoted than we are," he cried out to us. I was startled by the voice out of the darkness and the surprising remarks. I glanced towards the sentry's post, but the light blinded me and I could not see him. From his voice, however, I knew he was old — one of the aged territorials.

"Oh, no," I answered, for lack of anything better to say.

"Yes, you are. We all thank you. You are very devoted," he replied.

"No, not that, but I thank you," I said, and we were swallowed up in the darkness. Then I was sorry one of us hadn't gone back to shake hands with the kind-hearted old fellow. It seemed to me that it was the spirit of France speaking through him, voicing, as usual, her appreciation for any well-intentioned aid, and that we should have replied a little more formally.

JAMES R. McCONNELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Carthage, North Carolina; University of Virginia; was in the Field Service during 1915; subsequently went into the Lafayette Flying Corps and was shot down near Ham, while on a reconnaissance during the Somme advance in July, 1916. The advancing troops found his body several days later.

## II

### PONT-À-MOUSSON — BOIS LE PRÊTRE

*Pont-à-Mousson, June 17, 1915*

THIS is a dear little town with about eight thousand inhabitants. After breakfast I was asked by one of the men if I would like to look about. We turned to the left and entered the famous Bois le Prêtre where the artillery had not been. Here was an officers' cemetery, a terrible, sad sight, — six hundred officers' graves. Close by were also the graves of eighteen hundred soldiers. The little cemetery was quite impressive on the side of this lovely green hill with the great trees all around and the little plain wood crosses at each grave. As we waited, a broken-down horse appeared with a cart-load of what looked like old clothes, but which was really *des morts*. I had never seen a dead body until that moment. It was a horrible awakening — eight stiff, mangled, armless bodies — all men like ourselves with people loving them somewhere, all gone this way. A grave had been dug two metres deep, large enough to hold sixteen. One by one they were lowered into the grave.

*Pont-à-Mousson, Monday, June 28*

I HAD to go to Auberge Saint-Pierre at about two o'clock this morning. It was a sad trip for me. A boy about nineteen had been hit in the chest and half his side had gone. "*Très pressé*," they told me. And as we lifted him into the car, by a little brick house which was a mass of shell-holes, he raised his sad, tired eyes to mine and tried a brave smile. I went down the hill as carefully as I could and very slowly, but when I arrived at the hospital, I found I had been driving a hearse and not an ambulance. It made me feel very badly — the memory of that faint smile which was to prove the last effort of some dearly loved youth.



ON THE ROAD TO BOIS LE PRÊTRE



FONTAINE DU PÈRE HILARION, A SPRING IN BOIS LE PRÊTRE WHERE  
FRENCH AND GERMAN SOLDIERS FRATERNIZED IN  
THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR



## SECTION TWO

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All the poor fellows look at us with the same expression of appreciation and thanks; and when they are unloaded it is a common thing to see a soldier, probably suffering the pain of the damned, make an effort to take the hand of the American helper. I tell you tears are pretty near sometimes.

Tuesday, 5 P.M., July 6

I CARRIED over forty wounded yesterday a distance of a hundred and sixty kilometres and at nine o'clock turned in; to be waked up at two o'clock to go to Auberge Saint-Pierre. The Major was there to receive us, and so interested and appreciative is he that any one of us would do anything for him. Just as I was starting down with a full load I found I had picked up a nail, and a puncture was the order of the day. Two fellows ran forward; explained that in peace time they were chauffeurs, and refused to let me work on it; while the Major made me sit on a fallen tree by the roadside, smoke a cigarette, and talk to him. We are, of course, mere soldiers, but to be treated so kindly and so thoughtfully makes us feel that we must go on forever!

Later I had a German wounded *couché* given me and I probed out the fact that there were some six or eight French waiting to be taken. "Oh, but he is severely wounded — take him first!" I shall always remember that in France the German went before the less wounded Frenchmen!

### A TRIBUTE

Monday

THE Governor, or Prefect, of the Department of Lorraine, sent us from Nancy, for July Fourth, the following tribute:

"On this day, when you celebrate your national independence, at the same hour that France in violent combat defends her independence against an enemy whose madness for domination threatens the liberty of all nations,

and whose barbarous methods menace civilization, I send you the expression of the profound friendship of the French for your great and generous nation; and seize this occasion to assure you once more of the deep gratitude of the people of Lorraine for the admirable devotion of all the members of the American Ambulance of Pont-à-Mousson."

*Pont-à-Mousson, July 26*

OUR whole Section has been cited by order of the Division. Here is the translation:

"The American Ambulance, composed of volunteers, friends of our country, has been continually conspicuous for the enthusiasm, courage, and zeal of all its members; who, regardless of danger, have worked without rest to save our wounded, whose affection and gratitude they have gained."

## TWO TALES

*Pont-à-Mousson, August 15*

YESTERDAY was a red-letter day for me. The American mail arrived! I was brought back to actualities by the voice of a young French soldier of about twenty-one who stood beside me:

"You have just got some letters?"

"Yes, not even opened them yet."

"All those! You are to be married, perhaps?"

"No, *mon ami*."

"Surely it is your mother, then, who has written you so often."

"Only this one is from her," I answered. And then a strange silence fell. I did not feel like speaking, for, glancing up, I noticed that he was still looking at that one letter in my hand. Then, after fumbling for a few minutes in his uniform, he pulled out a packet of earth-stained letters, and said:

"These were from my mother; but I can't look for any more. She died last month."

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September 4

A SAD thing happened the other day to a friend of mine, a *poilu* who has been helping me to get specimens of perfect, empty shells. I had many a long talk with him. He used to like to tell me about his girl and how happy they were together before the war, and how the day peace was declared, he was going to marry her. Lately I had noticed he looked depressed, and one day I found out the reason. The postman came to the door. He looked at my friend, who had become silent, and shaking his head, said, "*Pas encore.*" My friend became very white, and presently confessed to me that he had had no letters for six weeks. A few days after, I saw him again and asked if he had heard from her. He said "No," very sullenly, and later, over a glass of beer, mentioned that his father had written him that she had been misbehaving herself. The poor fellow seemed stunned with the news. After vainly trying to cheer him up, I went back to dinner. The next morning I did not see him, but the following morning I was at headquarters when an urgent call came for an ambulance. My car happened to be just going, so I took the trip. "Where is the house?" I asked. "Just over there where the man is waving." It was the house of my friend. Need I end the story? A broken man, who had worked valiantly for twelve months under hellish conditions, to defend his country, had shot himself! We lifted him on to a stretcher and I sped away. Life was nearly extinct. I followed him into the operating-room, where he opened his eyes, and I think he recognized me. His lips moved — but I don't know.

### THE SPIRIT OF THE FRENCH

September 8

YESTERDAY I had a sudden call to fetch three badly wounded, one of whom was in great pain from a wound in the back, and the slightest jostle or bump I knew would cause him great agony. The doctor, pointing to one of the other two, said, "You must get him to the

operating-room as quickly as you can." "But," I answered, "I dare not go fast, *this* poor chap is in such a bad condition." The doctor shrugged his shoulders. But the man who was suffering had heard. "Go as fast as you can, my friend; it won't kill me!" I did so, and the bumps were bad. The poor fellow could not help uttering cries from time to time. But before I arrived at Belleville, the cries had ceased, as the great pain had made him unconscious, while the badly wounded man had died. "*C'est la guerre,*" said the doctor to whom I told the story, as he washed his hands for the operations.

The other day I paid a visit to a neighboring hospital, where one young fellow about my own age had had his left leg amputated. I sat by his bed and chatted with him. He told me of his wife — they had been a year and a half married — and of his child whom he had not yet seen. He was so very eager that somehow the pity of it made me turn aside for a second, and look out of the window. Quick of perception, out went his hand to mine. "Oh, she will understand, *camarade*," he said, smiling; "she will love me just the same — she is a Frenchwoman."

How can one help caring for France and French people, they have such a keen appreciation of the value of sympathy and gratitude? Here in the midst of torturing death, they at least are cheerful, and having put aside the barrier of selfishness are wholly simple and direct in their human relations. The fact that on every side there is daily evidence of this attitude, in spite of so bitter and costly a struggle, is high proof of the fineness of their civilization.

LESLIE BUSWELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A young Englishman, who was in the service during several months of 1915. Author of *Ambulance No. 10*. (See the Bibliography at the end of Vol. III.)

### III

#### A NIGHT OF SHELLING

*Pont-à-Mousson, May 20, 1915*

ONE evening, about 7.30, after the Germans had been firing on this place and the neighboring villages for some hours, I was called to Bozéville, a village on the road to Montauville consisting of a small cluster of one-story brick and frame buildings constructed in 1870 by the Germans for their soldiers. When I reached this place it was on fire, and the Germans, by a constant fusillade of shrapnel shells in and around the buildings and on the roads near them, were preventing any attempt being made to extinguish the fire. To drive up the narrow road, with the burning houses on one side and high garden wall, thank Heaven, on the other, hearing every few seconds the swish-bang of the shells, was decidedly nervous work and anything but peaceful. But after picking up the wounded, I returned here where conditions were much worse. At this time the Germans were throwing shells of large calibre at the bridge over the Moselle, and to reach the hospital to which I was bound, it was necessary to take the road which led to this bridge and turn to the left about a hundred yards before coming to it. Just as I was about to make this turn, two shells struck and exploded in the river under the bridge. There was a terrific roar and two huge columns of water rose into the air, seemed to stand there for some seconds and the next instant spray and bits of wood and shell fell on and around us. A minute later I turned into the hospital yard, where the effect, in the uncertain and fast-fading light, was ghostly, as earlier in the evening a shell had exploded in the yard and thrown an even layer of fine, power-like dust over everything. It resembled a shroud in effect, for nothing disturbed its even surface except the crater-like

hole made by the shell. On one side of the yard was the hospital, every window broken and its walls scarred by the pieces of shells; in the middle was the shell-hole, and on the other side was the body of a dead *brancardier*, lying on his back with a blanket thrown over him, which gave a particularly ghastly effect to the scene, for what was left of the daylight was just sufficient to gleam upon his bald forehead and throw into relief a thin streak of blood which ran across his head to the ground. Needless to say I left the place as quickly as possible.

### TO THE VICTOR BELONG THE SPOILS

ANOTHER scene which I do not think I will soon forget happened just after a successful French attack and shows war in a little different light, with more of the excitement and glory which are supposed to be attached to battle. It occurred at Montauville, a straggly little village of one and two-story stone and plaster houses built on the two sides of the road, situated on a saddle which connects one large hill on one side of it with another large hill on the other side of it. The village is used as a *dépôt* and resting-place for the troops near it. On this particular day the French had attacked and finally taken a position which they wanted badly, and at this time, just after sunset, the battle had ceased and the wounded were being brought into the *poste de secours*. The tints of the western sky faded away to a cloudless blue heaven, marked here and there by a tiny star. To the south an aeroplane was circling like a huge hawk with puffs of orange-tinted shrapnel smoke on all sides of it. In the village the soldiers were all in the streets or hanging out of the windows shouting to one another. The spirits of every one were high, and they well might be, for the French had obtained an advantage over the Germans and had succeeded in holding it. At this moment a French sergeant entered the town at the lower end and walked up the street. At first no one noticed him; then a slight cheer began, and before the man had advanced a hundred yards the soldiers had

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formed a lane through which he strode. He was a big fellow, his face smeared with blood and dirt and his left arm held in a bloody sling, while on his head was a German helmet with its glinting brass point and eagle. He swaggered nearly the entire length of the village through the shouting line of soldiers, gesticulating with his one well arm and giving as he went a lively account of what had happened. Thereupon some one started the *Marseillaise* and in a few minutes all were singing. I have heard football crowds sing after a victory and other crowds indulge in song, but I have never listened to such wild exultation as on this occasion. It was tremendous. I wish the Germans could have heard it. Perhaps they did, for they were not so far away and the sound seemed to linger and echo among the hills for some minutes after the last note had been struck.

CARLYLE H. HOLT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Hingham, Massachusetts; Harvard, '12. Served in Section Two from February to August of 1915. The above are extracts from two letters written to Field Service Headquarters.



## IV

### LEAVING PONT-À-MOUSSON

IT gave us rather a wrench to leave Pont-à-Mousson. The Section had been quartered there since April, 1915, and we were attached to the quaint town and to the friends we had made there. The morning of our departure was warm and clear. Walking along the convoy which had been formed in the road before our villa, came the *poilus* who shook hands with each *conducteur*. “*Au revoir, Monsieur.*” “*Au revoir, Paul.*” “*Bonne chance, Pierre.*” We took a last look at the town which had sheltered us during the most dramatic moments of our lives. Above the tragic silhouette of a huddle of ruined houses rose the grassy slopes of the great ridge crowned by the Bois le Prêtre, the rosy morning mists were lifting from the shell-shattered trees, and a golden sun poured down a spring-like radiance. Suddenly a great cloud of grayish white smoke rose over the haggard wood and melted slowly away in the northeast wind; an instant later, a reverberating boom signalled the explosion of a mine in the trenches. There was a shrill whistle, our lieutenant raised his hand, and the convoy swung down the road to Dieulouard. “*Au revoir, les Américains!*” cried our friends — a little mud-slopped, blue-helmeted handful, that waved to us till we turned the corner. “*Au revoir, les Américains!*”

Late in the afternoon we were assigned quarters in the barracks of Bar-le-Duc, where we found an English Section that had been as suddenly displaced as our own. Every minute loaded *camions* ground into town and disappeared towards the east, troops of all kinds came in, *flick, flick*, the sun shining on the barrels of the *lebel*s, a train of giant mortars, mounted on titanic trucks and drawn by big motor lorries, crashed over the pavements



"CAMOUFLAGE ON A ROAD GIVES AT BEST AN UNCERTAIN  
SENSE OF SECURITY"



THE REMAINS OF A RAILROAD STATION WHICH SERVED  
AS A "POSTE" NEAR VERDUN



and vanished somewhere. Some of our *conducteurs* made friends with the English drivers, and swapped opinions as to what was in the wind. One heard, "Well, those Frenchies have got something up their sleeve. We were in the battle of Champarng, and it began just like this." Round us, rising to the full sea of the battle, the tide of war surged and disappeared. At dusk a company of dragoons, big helmeted men on big horses, trotted by, their blue mantles and mediæval casques giving them the air of crusaders. At night the important corners of the streets were lit with cloth transparencies, with "Verdun" and a great black arrow painted on them. Night and day, going as smoothly as if they were linked by an invisible chain, went the hundred convoys of motor lorries. There was a sense of something great in the air — a sense of apprehension. "*Les Boches vont attaquer Verdun.*"

### TO PETIT-MONTHAIRON — NEAR VERDUN

On the 21st the order came for us to go to Petit-Monthairon (the Boches had made their first attack that morning, though this we did not then know), and near by we found a rather unlovely eighteenth-century château standing in a park built out on the meadows of the Meuse. The flooded river flowed round the dark pines, and at night one could hear the water roaring under the bridges. The château, which had been a hospital since the beginning of the war, reeked with ether and iodoform; pasty-faced, tired attendants unloaded mud, cloth, bandages, and blood that turned out to be human beings; an overwrought *Médecin Chef* screamed contradictory orders at everybody and flared into crises of hysterical rage.

Ambulance after ambulance came from the lines full of clients; kindly hands pulled out the stretchers and bore them to the wash-room, which was in the cellar of the dove-cote, in a kind of salt-shaker turret. Snip, snap went the scissors of the *brancardiers* who looked after the bath, — good souls these two — who slit the uniforms

from mangled limbs. The wounded lay naked in their stretchers while the attendant daubed them with a hot soapy sponge and the blood ran from their wounds through the stretcher to the floor and seeped into the cracks of the stones. A lean, bearded man closed his eyes over the agony of his opened entrails and died there. Somebody casually tossed a blanket over the body.

Outside, mingling with the roaring of the river, came the great, terrible drumming of the bombardment. An endless file of troops were passing down the great road. Night came on. Our ambulances were in a little side street at right angles to the great road, their lamp flares beating fiercely on a little section of the great highway. Suddenly, plunging out of the darkness into the intense radiance of the acetylene beams, came a battery of "75's," the helmeted men leaning over on the horses, the guns rattling and the harness clanking, a swift picture of movement that plunged again into darkness. And with darkness, the whole horizon became brilliant with cannon fire.

### "THE HORSESHOE OF FIRE"

WE were well within the horseshoe of German fire that surrounded the French lines. It was between midnight and one o'clock, the sky deep and clear, with big ice-blue winter stars. We halted at a certain road to wait our chance to deliver our wounded. It was a mêlée of beams of light, of voices, of obscure motions, sounds. Refugees went by, decent people in black, the women being escorted by a soldier. One saw sad, harassed faces. A woman came out of the turmoil carrying a cat in a canary cage; the animal swept the gilded bars with curved claws, and its eyes shone black and crazily. Others went by pushing baby carriages full to the brim with knickknacks and packages. Some trundled a kind of barrow. At the very edge of earth and sky was a sort of violet-white inferno, while the thousand finger-like jabs of the artillery shot unceasing to the stars, and the great semi-circular aureole

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flares of the shorter pieces were seen a hundred times a minute. Over the moorland came a terrible roaring such as a river might make tumbling through some subterranean abyss. A few miles below, a dull ruddy smouldering in the sky told of fires in Verdun. The morning clouded over, the dawn brought snow. Even in the daytime the great cannon flashes could be seen in the low, brownish snow-clouds.

On the way to Monthairon, two horses that had died of exhaustion lay in a frozen ditch. Ravens, driven from their repast by the storm, cawed hungrily in the trees.

We slept in the loft of one of the buildings that formed the left wing of the courtyard of the castle. To enter it, we had to pass through a kind of lumber-room on the ground floor in which the hospital coffins were kept. Above was a great dim loft, rich in a greasy, stably smell, a smell of horses and sweaty leather, the odor of a dirty harness room. At the end of the room, on a kind of raised platform, which ran along the wall over our heads, was the straw in which we lay — a crazy, sagging shelf, covered with oily dust, bundles of clothes, knapsacks, books, candle-ends, and steel helmets. All night long the horses underneath us squealed, pounded, and kicked.

I see in the lilac dawn of a winter morning the yellow light of an officer's lantern, and hear the call, "Up, boys, there's a call to Bar-le-Duc." The bundles in the dirty blankets groan; unshaven, unwashed faces turn tired eyes to the lantern; some, completely worn out, lie in a kind of sleepy stupor, while a wicked screaming whistle passes over our heads, and the shell, bursting on a near-by location, startles the dawn.

Later, the back of the attack was broken, and we began to get a little rest. But during the first week our cars averaged runs of two hundred miles a day, over roads chewed to pieces, and through very difficult traffic. In several of the villages there were unusually formidable shell gauntlets to be run.

### LONELINESS — THE VOICE OF THE SHELL

IT is night. You can imagine how lonely it is here under the black, star-swept sky, the houses only masses of regular blackness in the darkness, the street silent as a dune in the desert and devoid of any sign of human life. Muffled and heavy, the explosion of a torpedo inscribes its solitary half-note on the blank lines of the night's stillness. I go up to my room, and sigh with relief as my sulphur match boils blue and breaks into a short-lived yellow flame. Shadows are born, leaping and rising, and I move swiftly towards my candle-end, the flame catches and burns straight and still in the cold, silent room. The people who lived here were very religious; an ivory Christ on an ebony crucifix hangs over the door, and solemn-eyed, the pure and lovely head of Jeanne d'Arc stands on my mantel. What a marvellous history, hers! I think it the most beautiful mystic tale in our human annals.

Silence, sleep, the crowning mercy. A few hours go by and morning comes. There is a call, "*Monsieur Shin, — un couché à —*" I wake. The night clerk of the *bureau* is standing in the doorway. An electric flashlight in his hand sets me a-blinking. I dress, shivering a bit, and am soon on my way. The little gray machine goes cautiously on in the darkness, bumping over shell-holes, guided by the iridescent mud of the last day's rain. A bright flash illuminates the road. A shell sizzles overhead. I reach the *poste de secours* and find a soldier in the roadway. More electric hand-lamps. Down a path comes a stretcher and a man wounded in arm and thigh. We put him into the *voiture*, cover him up, and away I start on my long, dark ride to the hospital, a lonely nerve-tightening ride.

The voice of war is the voice of the shell. You hear a perfectly horrible sound as if the sky were made of cloth and the Devil were tearing it apart, a screaming undulating sound followed by an explosion of fearful violence, bang! The violence of the affair is what impresses you, the suddenly released energy of that murderous burst.

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When I was a child I used to wander around the shore and pick up hermit crabs and put them on a plate. After a little while you would see a very prudent claw come out of the shell, then two beady eyes, finally the crab in *propria persona*. I was reminded of that scene on seeing people come cautiously out of their houses after a shell had fallen, peeping carefully out of doorways, and only venturing to emerge after a long reconnoitring.

### THE RELIGION OF THE TRENCHES

A NEW religion has arisen in the trenches, a faith much more akin to Mahomet than to Christ. It is a fatalism of action. The soldier finds his salvation in the belief that nothing will happen to him until his hour comes, and the logical corollary of this belief — that it does no good to worry — is his rock of ages. It is a curious thing to see *poilus* — peasants, artisans, scholars — completely in the grip of this philosophy. The real religion of the front is the philosophy of Mahomet. Death has been decided by Fate, and the Boches are the unbelievers. After all, Islam in its great days was a virile faith, the faith of a race of soldiers.

### A LETTER FROM VERDUN

THE other day I climbed to the top of Vauban's citadel, and looked out over the forts, the buff-brown moorlands and the crumbling villages. To the west, a battle was taking place, dull-colored smoke lay close to the ground, and now and then a shell would break, a pin point of light, in the upper fringes of the haze. What in Heaven's name is to be the end of all this? What is the world to be like which will some day follow this cruel welter of savagery and pain? You know that I reject the pacifist case because I see war as part of the web of life; it is competition distilled to its ultimate essence, and will not be done away with until international competition is under some rigorous and centralized control. Yet how can such a despotism of power be established, and by whom? Certainly war cannot be eliminated from the mechanism of

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civilization by a folding of hands and a general promise to be good. Yet this sort of thing is civilization committing suicide. Is n't it appalling to think of France, "the land of the idea," being thus compelled to abandon her science and art and to waste her blood and treasure in this unspeakable massacre? We ought all of us, young Boches, too, to be fighting side by side in the endless war men must wage on the various cussednesses of nature. This cheerless life is acid to any one with memories of an old, beloved New England hearth and close family ties and friendships. To half jest, I am enduring war for peace of mind.

How lonely my old house must be when the winter storms surge round it at midnight. How the great flakes must swirl about its ancient chimney, and fall softly down the black throat of the fireplace to the dark, un-garnished hearth. The goblin who polished the pewter plates in the light of the crumbling fire-brands has gone to live with his brother in a hollow tree on the hill. But when you come to Topsfield, the goblin himself, red flannel cap and all, will open the door to you as the house's most honored and welcome guest.

A fusée éclairante has just run over the wood, the "*Bois de la mort*," the wood of the hundred thousand dead; and side by side with the dead are the living, the soldiers of the army of France, holding through bitter cold and a ceaseless shower of iron and hell, the far-stretching lines. If there is anything I am proud of, it is of having been with the French Army, the most devoted and heroic of the war.

HENRY SHEAHAN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Topsfield, Massachusetts; Harvard, '09; served from August, 1915, to April, 1916; author of *A Volunteer Poilu*. (See Bibliography in the Appendix to Vol. III.)

## V

## EN ROUTE — 1916

SECTION Two left Pont-à-Mousson about February 21, 1916, and on Washington's Birthday our French Lieutenant gave us our "order to move"; but all he could tell us about our destination was that we were going north. We started from Bar-le-Duc, where we had spent a few days overhauling and painting the cars, about noon, and it took six hours to make forty miles through roads covered with snow, swarming with troops, and all but blocked by convoys of food carts and sections of trucks. Of course we knew that there was an attack in the neighborhood of Verdun, but we did not know who was making it or how it was going. Then about four o'clock in the short winter twilight we passed two or three regiments of French colonial troops on the march with all their field equipment. They were lined up on each side of the road around their soup kitchens, which were smoking busily, and I had a good look at them as we drove along. It was the first time that I had seen an African Army in the field, and though they had a long march, they were cheerful and in high spirits at the prospect of battle. They were all young, active men, of all colors and complexions, from blue-eyed blonds to shiny blacks, and wore khaki, and brown shrapnel casques.

After that we rode north along the Meuse, through a beautiful country where the snow-covered hills, with their sky-lines of carefully pruned French trees, made me think of masterpieces of Japanese art. In the many little villages there was much excitement and activity — troops, artillery, and munitions being rushed through to the front, and there were also the consequent wild rumors of great attacks and victories. Curiously enough, there were few who thought of defeat, all sure, even when a

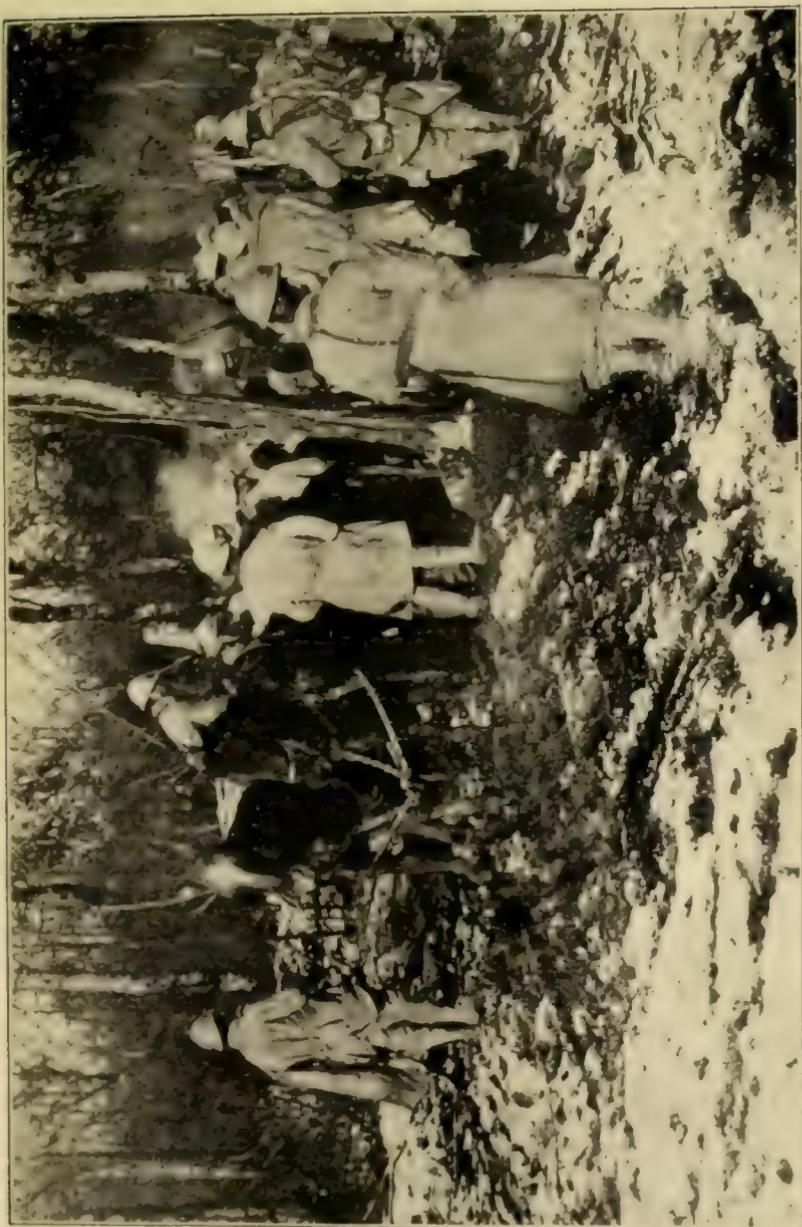
retreat was reported that the French were winning; and that spirit of confidence had much to do with stopping the German advance.

At about six in the evening we reached our destination, some forty miles northeast of Bar-le-Duc. The little village, Petit-Monthairon, where we stopped had been a railroad centre until the day before, when the Germans started bombarding it. Now the town was evacuated, and the smoking station deserted. The place had ceased to exist, except for a hospital which was established on the southern edge of the town in a lovely old château, overlooking the Meuse, whither we were called as soon as we arrived to take such wounded as could be moved to the nearest available railhead, ten miles away, on the main road, and four miles south of Verdun. We started out in convoy; but with the conditions of traffic, it was impossible to stick together, and it took some of us till five o'clock the next morning to make the trip. That was the beginning of the attack for us, and the work of evacuating the wounded to the railway stations went steadily on until March 15, during which period it was left to the driver to decide how many trips it was physically possible for him to make in each twenty-four hours, for there were more wounded than could be carried, and no one could be certain of keeping any kind of schedule with the roads as they were then.

### THE ROADS ABOUT VERDUN

SOMETIMES we spent five or six hours waiting at a cross-road, while columns of troops and their equipment filed steadily by. Sometimes at night we could make a trip in two hours that had taken us ten in daylight. Sometimes, too, we crawled slowly to a station only to find it deserted, shells falling, and the hospital removed to some still more distant point of the line. Situations and conditions changed from day to day,—almost from hour to hour. One day it was sunshine and spring, with roads six inches deep in mud, no traffic and nothing to remind one of war,

SOUT' KITCHENS SMOKING BUSHY BESIDE THE ROAD





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except the wounded in the car and the distant roar of the guns, which sounded like a giant beating a carpet. The next day, it was winter again, with mud changed to ice, the roads blocked with troops, and the Germans turning hell loose with their heavy guns.

In such a crisis as those first days around Verdun, ammunition and fresh men are the all-essential things. The wounded are the *déchets*, the "has-beens," and so must take the second place. But the French are too gallant and tender-hearted not to make sacrifices. For instance, I remember one morning I was slapped off the road into the ditch, with a broken axle, while passing a solitary *camion*, whereupon the driver got down, came over and apologized for the accident which was easily half my fault. Then we unloaded four cases of "seventy-five" shells that he was carrying, put my three wounded on the floor of his car, and he set out slowly and carefully up the ice-covered road, saying to me with a smile as he left, "Don't let the Boches get my *marmites* while I'm gone." For some time I sat there alone on the road, watching the shells break on a hill some miles away to the north, and wondering when I could get word of my mishap back to the base. Then a staff car appeared down the highway, making its way along slowly and with difficulty, because, being without chains, it skidded humorously, with engine racing and the chauffeur trying vainly to steer. There was a Captain of the *Service des Autos* sitting on the front seat, who was so immaculately clean and well-groomed that he seemed far away from work of any kind. But when the car stopped completely about halfway up the little hill on which I was broken down, he jumped out, took off his fur coat, and using it to give the rear wheels a grip on the ice, he swung it under the car. As the wheels passed over it, he picked it up and swung it under again. So the car climbed the hill and slid down the other slope round the curve and out of sight. It was just another incident that made me realize the spirit and energy of the French Automobile Service.

But the Captain had not solved any of my difficulties. He had been too busy with his own to notice me or wonder why an American ambulance was sprawled in a ditch with four cases of shells alongside. So I waited there about two hours until an American came by and took back word of my accident and of the parts necessary to set it right. In the meantime, about noon, my friend came back in his *camion* to take up his cases of shells and reported my wounded safe at the railway station. We lunched together on the front seat of the *camion*, bread, tinned "monkey meat," and red wine, while he told me stories about his life as a driver.

As soon as we had finished lunch he left me, and I waited for another two hours until the American staff car (in other surroundings I should call it an ordinary Ford touring-car with a red cross or so added) came along loaded with an extra "rear construction," and driven by the Chief himself. It took us another four hours to remove my battered rear axle and put in the new parts; but my car was back in service by midnight.

This was a typical instance of the kind of accident that was happening, and there were about three "Ford casualties" every day. But thanks to the simplicity of the mechanism, and to the fact that, with the necessary spare parts, the most serious indisposition can be remedied in a few hours, our Section was at the front for a year — ten months in the Bois le Prêtre, and two months at Verdun — without being sent back out of service for general repairs. In the Bois le Prêtre we had carried the wounded from the dressing-stations to the first hospital, while at Verdun we were on service from the hospital to the railheads. In this latter work of evacuation the trips were much longer, thirty to ninety miles; so the strain on the cars was correspondingly greater. As our cars, being small and fast, carried only three wounded on stretchers or five seated, our relative efficiency was low in comparison with the wear and tear of the "running gear" and the amount of oil and petrol used. But in the period from

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February 22 to March 13, twenty days, with an average of eighteen cars working, we carried 2046 wounded 18,915 miles. This would be no record on good open roads, but with the conditions I have described I think it justified the existence of our volunteer organization,—if it needed justification. Certainly the French thought so; but they are too generous to be good judges.

Except for our experiences on the road, there was little romance in the daily routine. True, we were under shell-fire, and had to sleep in our cars or in a much-inhabited hayloft, and eat in a little inn, half farmhouse and half stable, where the food was none too good and the cooking none too clean. But we all realized that the men in the trenches would have made of such conditions a luxurious paradise; so that kept us from thinking of it as anything more than a rather strenuous "camping out."

FRANK HOYT GAILOR<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Memphis, Tennessee; Sewanee and Columbia Universities; spent parts of 1915 and 1916 in the Service. Later served as First Lieutenant in the American Field Artillery.



## VI

### IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

*Verdun, May, 1916*

FOR two weeks the Section worked night and day with scarcely time for sleeping and eating, but when our labor slowed up, the men had time to catch up lost sleep. Sleeping quarters were in the loft of a barn between the lane, which was the entrance to the estate, and the château. Due partly to the rainy and damp weather, and the hard work, many of the fellows were on the verge of illness, and at night the loft sounded very much like a consumptive retreat. Every available space was occupied by the sleepers, and a few of the Section found accommodations in a couple of small buildings in the rear of the château, on the edge of the park, a small shack used for storing fishing paraphernalia, and another near by which gave shelter from nothing but the rain and snow. One of the strangest things in that part of the estate was an "Old Town" canoe with a paddle made from a broken airplane propeller which belonged to an aviator from the flying field on the top of the hill. From time to time several of our fellows went canoeing in it on the Meuse which flowed close by.

The meals were served in a farmhouse on the main road, at the head of the lane, these eating quarters being the worst part of our life there. The owners still hung on, though they had been ordered to leave long before, and their presence did not add to the pleasures of the spot. The dining-room was the kitchen and living-room, and at eating times was jammed full of hungry Americans, Frenchmen who were trying to buy wine of the Madame, and the Madame's family of eight very dirty children. A table in the centre of the room was reserved for the Section, though there was scarcely place for half the men.

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Plates and table hardware were seldom washed, and it often happened that nothing was cleaned for several meals, while to add to the unpleasantness of the situation, hostlers kept opening and closing a door which was the entrance to the foulest stable imaginable. Possibly there would have been a general "kick" on the part of the Section if it had not been for the fact that we were worn out from the hard work and long hours of driving, which sometimes amounted to over 200 kilometres per day per car.

The cars too were in a sad state and most of them fit for the "graveyard" in Paris. On March 4, one new car and two overhauled ones came out from Paris, and two days later, two more arrived. That night orders were received at eight o'clock to move to Vadelaincourt at once.

Heavy fighting was going on then between Hill 304 and the Meuse and there was such a stream of wounded pouring into Vadelaincourt that the hospital was swamped. There was no room at the château for the freshly operated-upon men, so they were taken at once to other hospitals in the direction of Bar-le-Duc and Révigny. One French sanitary Section and two British Sections had been doing the work, but there were too many wounded for these outfits and Section Two was called upon to help.

The majority of our cars arrived at the château by 10 o'clock, and after throwing duffle-bags and blanket rolls into a barn, the men set to work evacuating and worked steadily at their task for nearly three days with no sleep. The first night every car evacuated to Révigny over the main Bar-le-Duc-Verdun road, which was a continual stretch of holes and ruts, so that no car could go more than fifteen miles an hour, due to the roughness of the road and the dense traffic. After the first four days the French Section and one of the British Sections left, the whole work now falling to our Section Two and to English Section Two. There was still plenty of it, but it could be run more systematically.

## AT CAMP

THE Section slept in its cars, which were parked on the side of the road near the hospital, and our kitchen was established in one of the rooms of a farmhouse, very close to a barn and a huge heap of manure. The dining-room, which was a sort of "lean-to" against the side of the house, was made of blankets and canvas and not very watertight. For three weeks we lived this way, and then, during a spell of good weather, erected a tent (borrowed from the head French military doctor, who was a very good sort) in a lot across the road from the aviation field. However, most of the Section by that time had found sleeping-quarters in two rat-infested barns, everybody however, taking the unpleasant life philosophically. One of the barns was also occupied by the English Section, and when one night it caught fire near the *essence* tanks, and burned to the ground, several of the men had very narrow escapes and five of the Americans lost all their blankets.

Night work at a *triage* on the main Verdun road was now being taken up every other night, in addition to the labor of evacuating from Vadelaincourt, which meant long runs to Froidos, Chaumont, and sometimes Révigny, all, however, interesting in their way.

On April 8th, Frank Gailor ("Bishop") left us to the regret of everybody. "Bish" was one of the most popular men of the Section and told most interesting stories of his work in Belgium at the beginning of the war, when he was a member of the Relief Committee. What his "farewell party" lacked in elaborateness was made up for in the sincere feelings of regret which each man felt.

After eating in our "lean-to" by the manure heap for three weeks, the same French doctor, already mentioned, offered us, as our dining-room, the use of a spare tent which was erected in the field opposite the aviation field. The kitchen, too, was moved into a small tent which was rigged up between two pine trees a few feet from the dining-tent. A table in the form of a "T" was built, and

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with the addition of a set of shelves, known as the "American Bar," built in one corner, everybody was satisfied with our prandial arrangements. "Bishop" Sailor's farewell party, by the way, occurred in these new quarters, and also took the form of a "house-warming," with speeches by Emery Pottle, Graham, Harold Willis and one or two others. A quintet formed with Pottle, Nolan, Graham, Willis, and Seccombe made its initial appearance on this occasion, and the party broke up at a late hour with everybody more or less convinced that he was the next thing to a Caruso.

For a few days thereafter the weather had been ideal, but a change for the worse took place and the old tents had a hard time. There was no work to speak of and everybody spent the day "under canvas" around a small stove indulging in arguments on any sort of subject, while music by Nolan and Graham, on mandolin and guitar, caused the time to pass away agreeably. For three weeks we had nothing but rain, hail, and snow, and as the tent was pretty old, it leaked in many places. The field and side hill was a mass of slimy mud six inches deep, and ten or twelve men were required to push every car into the road.

The weather became better about the first of May, and as the aviators became more active, we got better acquainted with Navarre, Boillot, and Guynemer. This aviation field, by the way, was one of the largest on the whole front and had every type of plane then used by the French. Navarre was then flying a bright red Nieuport and never failed to give a thrilling exhibition whenever he took the air.

On Sunday, May 21, everybody attended an open-air funeral service for the burial of three aviators, one of whom was Boillot. An altar was erected between two trees and the service, which was very impressive, was largely attended by artillery and aviation officers, some three hundred of whom followed the bodies to the cemetery.

The last of the month the fighting grew worse about Fort de Vaux and Fort Douaumont and the Section worked every night and most of the days at the *triage*.

## TO BAR-LE-DUC FOR REPOS — AIR RAIDS

THE 31st found the Section moving to Bar-le-Duc, where it was to be outfitted with new cars and where it was also supposed to be *en repos*. But as we took the place of and did the work which an English section had been doing, this was far from being a rest, for during the twenty-seven days there, an actual record of 10,500 men carried was one of the things the men pointed to with pride. It meant that a man was on duty fifty-three hours at a stretch, sleeping at one of three places — wherever he was working — and then going off duty from 1 P.M. until 8.30 the next A.M.

June 10

THE second day in town, the Boche planes raided Bar-le-Duc at 1 P.M. and the Section saw some exciting work. There were many narrow escapes in driving round picking up the dead and wounded, Barclay<sup>1</sup> having the closest call when a bomb exploded back of his car and a huge piece went through the body close to his head. Twenty-four planes were counted in all, and 36 dead and 132 wounded were the results. On June 16 and 17, there were two more raids, but they were not so severe as the first one.

Our living quarters at Bar-le-Duc were in an old building built in 1575 and once a monastery, but now used to quarter troops in. The whole edifice was in the form of a square with a large courtyard inside, where were always every night a hundred or more *poilus* on their way to and from the front. Towards the end of June was a change of French officers, Lieutenant Maas being replaced by Lieutenant Rodocanachi, who became the most popular commander the Section ever had.

<sup>1</sup> Leif Norman Barclay of New York City; killed in French Aviation, 1917.

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At this period, many men used to have lunch with the Lafayette Escadrille, which was stationed just outside of town, where Victor Chapman was killed on the 23d, and Balsley badly hurt a few days before. Walter Lovell left on June 19 to enter the training school of aviation. He had made a fine *Chef de Section* and everybody hated to see him go. Oliver Wolcott was made *Chef*, but was recalled to the States when the Mexican trouble started, and so filled the post only a week.

### BACK TO PETIT-MONTHAIRON

JUNE 27 the Section moved back to Petit-Monthairon, where it did evacuation work until September 2, and where we had a small house with sleeping-quarters, dining-room and kitchen, officers' rooms and *bureau* which were fairly comfortable. There was not much work to do at this moment so several ball games were played with Section Eight and a Norton Section, all of which we lost, with one exception, but which furnished good fun and exercise. Several more new cars and men joined the Section there, J. M. Walker, our new *Chef*, being among them.

Sections One and Eight were in Dugny part of this time and a certain amount of visiting was done by all the Sections, Section Four, stationed at Ippécourt, sending a few men over to us from time to time. There were big parties on the night of July 4th and again on July 14. Then, too, Powel received a cardboard Victrola with records and gave evening concerts in the "loft," while we had good swimming in the Meuse along with plenty of mosquitoes. On July 29 we received a Hotchkiss workshop car and a new staff car.

On August 6, Mrs. Vanderbilt, who presented each of us with a box of cigarettes, visited the Section for lunch along with Mr. Andrew: everybody was "all dolled up" after spending the whole morning in brushing, polishing, and prinking in general. On September 2, the Section moved to Rampont and took over the *postes* at Esnes, and Hills 232 and 272, which Section Four had been working,

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Section Four taking over the *postes* between 272 and the Meuse. Five cars were on duty every night, receiving orders at the telephone station at Jouy, three of the cars going to Hill 272 and the others to Esnes or Hill 232. For about ten days the *poste* in Esnes was the same old ruined château which Section Four had used, when a new *poste* was established on the outskirts of the town on the road to Béthincourt, where the cars had to run quite a bit farther through the centre of the town over a road full of shell-holes and wreckage off the buildings.

In September the French, in an effort to straighten their line made an attack on the Mort Homme. The artillery barrage started at 5 P.M., and an hour later the infantry "went over." The whole Section had been ordered to Jouy at 6 P.M. and at 7 P.M. the first call came for cars at Hill 272. Shortly after, the rest of the cars were called and we all worked until daybreak carrying in over 250 wounded.

EDWARD NICHOLAS SECCOMBE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Derby, Connecticut; served six months in S.S.U. Two in 1916; rejoined the Service in November, 1917, and remained in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the war.





VERDUN!



THE COURTYARD OF THE ESNES CHÂTEAU



## VII

### AT A HOSPITAL

*Petit-Monthairon, August 9, 1916*

WE are quartered in one of the farmhouses belonging to a château, which is now a hospital. You remember, no doubt, the French farmhouses — a blank wall on the roadside with only an entrance to the courtyard; a dark kitchen, a few bedrooms and a loft, with a few sheds out back. The loft is divided into two parts. We sleep in one of them on stretchers propped up from the floor by boxes or our little army trunks. Some of the boys don't prop up their stretchers, but I find it better to elevate mine, as the rats run all over the floor and incidentally over you if your stretcher rests on the floor. The fleas seem more numerous near the floor, and there are spiders, too. I've been pretty well "bit up." But yesterday I soaked my blankets in petrol and hung them on the line in the courtyard for an airing, so I think I've left the vermin behind. I also sprayed my clothes, especially my underwear, with petrol, which does n't make much for comfort, except in so far as the animals are baffled. Flies and mosquitoes are abundant, too. We all have mosquito nets which we put over our heads in the evening, making us all look like the proverbial huckleberry pie on the railroad restaurant counter. The *poilus* around us have adopted our methods, and you see them sitting about looking in the distance for all the world like Arabs. We are better off than the other Sections, though, for our house is very commodious, and near by we have a river to swim in every day. So it is no effort to bathe.

We carry the wounded from the château to the trains. Some trips are about seventeen kilometres one way, and others are more. As the roads are well used, they are rather bumpy; so you have to go very slowly. You can't

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dash at full speed with wounded. It is slow work, for, in addition to the necessity of making the trip as easy as possible for the *blessés*, you have to dodge in and out among the transports, which usually fill up the roads. There is a steady stream going and coming — horses, mules, and auto-trucks.

I never saw so many — thousands of each kind. Then there is no lagging or loafing; you blow your whistle and the driver of what is ahead of you gives you six inches of road, you squeeze through and take a chance that the nigh mule on the team coming the other way does n't kick. You well know how dusty the roads are. But we have to drive right ahead regardless of it; so you can imagine what sights we are when we get back to our farmhouse — scarecrows, each one. The dust is powdery and comes off easily, however, so one can get comfortable in a short time.

The *blessés* are a quiet lot, especially after you give them cigarettes. I always pass around the cigarettes before starting, for then I'm sure those *en arrière* will be still. Every now and then you have a "humming-bird," that is, a *blessé* who is so hurt that the least jar pains him and he moans or yells. You can't help him any, so you just have to put up with it. However, I don't like "humming-birds," for you feel, when you are carrying them, that you hit more bumps than you really do.

### THE POILU'S AMATEUR THEATRICALS

I WENT the other day to a show in Trayon where some of the troops are *en repos*. It was wonderful, for there, right within range of the Boche guns, the French soldiers were giving one of the best musical performances I have ever seen. Among the performers — men who only a little while before had been in the trenches — were professional musicians, singers, and actors. It was not amateurish at all; in fact, it was highly professional. The theatre was fitted up more or less like the stage at the Hasty Pudding Club of Harvard. There was an amateurish back-drop,

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however; but everything else savored of the real Parisian touch. Among the audience were generals, colonels, under-officers, *poilus*, and five of us. We were invited, inasmuch as we had lent some of our uniforms for the actors. I saw my cap walk out on the stage on a fellow with a little head, so it did n't even rest on his ears, but rather on his nose. The soldiers who could not get in thronged the courtyard and cheered after every song or orchestra piece. The orchestra was made up of everything in a city orchestra, including a leader with a baton. You see each regiment is bound to have professional men in it and they get up these shows. On the whole, it was one of the most impressive sights I've seen, and on top of it all, there was a continuous firing in the near distance. Imagine it, if you can!

We have a cook and a servant, — one of the *poilus* who is quartered here, too, and who earns a few sous on the side by serving us, — also a French lieutenant who is really the head of the Section, a *maréchal des logis*, and a few other French retainers. They sleep in the same loft with us, and every night they chatter very late, kid each other about the fish they caught or did not catch in the river during the day, laugh and giggle at each other just like children. They are awfully amusing. By the way, all the *poilus* who are *en repos* fish, although there are only minnows in the streams about here. To-day I asked several how many they caught, and they said they were only fishing to pass the time. It seems to be a great diversion, for they all do it. Besides fishing the *poilus en repos* trap foxes, hedgehogs, rabbits, and other animals and then train them. Over across the road in one of the courtyards are two of the cutest little foxes I have ever seen, which play around and are just like little collies until we show up, when they scamper off and get behind a box or a stove and blink at us. We tried to buy one of them, but the owners are too fond of them to let them go.

They all bathe, too, every day — the *poilus*. We go in with them, the mules, and the horses. Probably some-

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where else in the same river the Boches are bathing. Such is life. We are extremely lucky to get a chance to wash at all and I'm afraid when we move from here — for we shall soon be moved to *poste* duty — we shan't have the comforts we are now enjoying.

I'll write again soon, but now I'm going to bed, — that is, roll up in my blankets on my stretcher, for there is an early call for to-morrow morning, which means getting your machines over to the château at six o'clock, all ready for the day's work. It's great fun and I am awfully glad to be here. Moreover, there is a satisfaction in knowing that you are helping and that the French are very appreciative, from the *poilu* up to the highest officers.

CHARLES BAIRD, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York; Harvard, '11; served in both Sections Two and Three; the above extracts are from letters.



## VIII

### IN AND AROUND VERDUN

*Petit-Monthairon, July 23, 1916*

HERE we are in this quiet little French village. We move something over a hundred sick and wounded men a day from one hospital to another, or to the hospital trains that take them out of the military zone. I don't find the occupation trying. The men we carry have had hospital treatment and most of them are not in extreme pain; a fact that makes it easier for the drivers when the road is rough, as it generally is. The road service, however, is really excellent. Gangs of men are breaking stones all the time and steam-rollers crushing the stones into smooth hard highways. But the traffic is so enormous that it's only a week or two before the road is worn into little ridges, much like the waves in Florentine paintings.

The dust makes an added complication in driving. A convoy of *camions* raises a cloud of dust through which you can't see for five minutes after they have passed. This slows us up, for it makes it dangerous to cut around slow-moving vehicles. Even on your own side of the road you are n't entirely safe. To-day I was running along when out of the dust, perhaps twenty feet in front of me, I saw the radiator of a truck. Legally, I would have been justified in keeping on; but he was shut in by a forage convoy; so I did n't stay to argue the matter, but took to the fields, blessing the lightness of my car which made it possible for me to negotiate a pile of road material and a cultivated field.

I am getting quite *blasé* to the sights of the road, — paying little attention to ammunition trains or soldiers on the march; but I still slow down when an aeroplane rises near me or when a fair-sized bunch of German prisoners go by.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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September, 1916

WENT up to my *poste de secours* with my orderly. It was a mean night, gray and dark. We started early so as to get a little twilight and ran about a mile. Then I heard the whistle of a punctured tire. By the time we had that fixed it was really dark. Nevertheless we went the next mile to the central *poste* (Jouy) without trouble. Here we waited.

It is a dull place — a little tiny village, headquarters for our division; after eight-thirty, no lights allowed in the streets or showing from the windows. One of our cars is always there on *piquet* duty. The two drivers of this car were playing checkers inside their ambulance by candle light. We watched them for awhile, then we went into the *poste*, which is merely a recording and telephone centre. The sergeant on duty sat at a desk reading a French novel. Another man was at one end of a bench with "Alice in Wonderland." He did n't do it from choice, he explained, but because he could n't find any other book in camp which he did n't know through and through. I sat on the other end of the bench and did exercises in French subjunctives.

A little after midnight a 'phone call for a car at Esnes came in. We were rather hoping it would n't, for it had begun to rain very hard outside, and it was impossible to see your hand before your face. However, we went out and got started. It was n't so terribly hard, though our eyes ached from the strain of constantly trying to see what we could n't possibly see. But we got along up the hill and along the level, passing innumerable artillery teams. It was hard to make out the road here and I was glad when I saw a gleam of light ahead and heard the clink of harness. I thought it was a driver lighting his pipe and steered for the light. In a minute my companion yelled and jumped; and my right wheel dropped down. I had run over a wall at the side of the road and my front axle was resting on the ground and the whole car was so canted that there seemed every

## SECTION TWO

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chance of its toppling over at any moment. On investigation I found that the light I had seen was by the edge of an artillery *caisson* which had gone all the way down the bank!

We could n't do much by ourselves, but some teamsters came along and joined us heartily as French soldiers always do. We were really too few for the job, but we lifted with all our might and actually did get the car back in the road again. So we once more drove on in the rain, creeping ahead at low speed, however. I remembered the road pretty well from the night before, and finally pulled into our *poste* (Esnes). Luckily our wounded were n't so badly off and were able to sit up. We started back, passing long lines of soldiers returning from the trenches, who were very spooky in the black. But a minute or so later my right wheel dropped into a shell-hole where a big *obus* had just exploded. I was glad there were plenty of soldiers at hand. All of these who could find fingerhold lifted and the car pulled out. It seemed incredible but nothing was broken.

We got along slowly after that without accident. About two miles from the *Poste Central* it began to rain torrents and we could see nothing. It took real resolution to push on. I 've seldom been so relieved over anything as when we made out dimly the houses of the village. From there on to the sorting hospital (Claires Chesnes) we could use lights and my one flickering gas burner seemed fairly to blaze. It had taken us three hours to do twenty miles.

*Fromeréville, October*

I WENT up and got three men with no more trouble than dropping both rear wheels in a shell-hole as I turned around; but I got some *poilus* to push me out and returned to headquarters about 2 A.M. However, I had n't much more than gone to sleep before there was a 'phone call for Marre, which is a long way over dark and lonely roads. I wallowed through a number of shallow shell-holes, turning over one spring-hanger thus pushing the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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body against one wheel and creating a contact brake, bad for the tire. Leaving the *poste* I dropped two wheels into a shell-hole and had to get my *blessés* out and have them help push. About halfway to the *poste* I ran out of gas. I put in a gallon from my reserve, and when I had got it in, found from the smell that it was kerosene. We were not far from a French battery and the road was fairly pock-marked with shell-holes; so, although there were no shells coming in at the time, I thought it better not to stay there, and ran on on the kerosene. You can do it on low speed, apparently. I got down to headquarters absolutely dead tired. Now I am home again also dead tired.

*Later*

I 'VE seen any number of regiments on the march and never yet heard the men singing or the bands playing. In Paris this may seem a little cold and uninterested, but here where the real work is done it is wonderfully impressive — suggestive of endless determination and reserve strength. Now, determination and reserve strength without hysteria is just what France is showing. I am the more struck with this because severe fighting is going on close to us and I have been in the midst of the wounded coming into the big evacuation hospital. There were n't enough ambulances to go around and great crowds, with bloody bandaged heads and arms, came in the big motor trucks that carry the soldiers up to the line. All last night I saw them coming in, grim and suffering and uncomplaining. It was one of the great uplifting experiences of my life. I have seen nothing to match it for sheer courage, moral as well as physical. There is n't the rawest, most provincial driver in our work who has n't expressed the most unqualified admiration for the French *poilus*. Certainly, as I looked at them last night, they seemed to me sane, entirely sane men, terribly brave and unbeatable.

The rumors are that the victory was impressive and

## SECTION TWO

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that Fort Douaumont is ours again. It's a fine achievement if true; but that seems less important to me now than the spirit I've seen. Out here at the front one does n't worry about the French Army.

JOHN R. FISHER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Arlington, Vermont; Columbia; entered the Service in May, 1916, and a year later was put in charge of the organizing of the Field Service Training Camp at May-en-Multien. Later Mr. Fisher became Captain in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## IX

### THE LAST DAYS OF THE BATTLE OF VERDUN

*Rampont (near Verdun), October 6, 1916*

WE are located here in the woods, overlooking Rampont, between Sainte-Ménehould and Verdun, near Nixeville, and about twelve miles from Le Mort Homme, Hill 304 and Hill 272. Already I have had some wonderful experiences during these three weeks at Verdun. During the attack a fortnight ago, we certainly had a time of it. In addition, the loss of Kelley and the injuries to Sanders, of Section Four, over at their *poste* at Marre, was a terrible tragedy to us. Both boys I knew and talked with only a few days before the affair happened.

The attack lasted three nights, and we had many interesting adventures. The main stunt is to keep on the road. Out of eighteen cars, four were "in bad"; either their drivers tried to climb trees or walls, or else supply wagons with excited drivers kept to the middle of the road, and, of course, side-swiped the little Ford into a ditch. Seccombe and Struby managed to ditch their cars nicely. Iselin had a most wonderful "stunt" with his. After climbing an embankment, it fell over on its side, all four wheels in the air; but to our amazement, it "chugged" off nicely when righted by a dozen husky *poilus*, always ready to help Americans. Well, I had a little difficulty myself finding the road, as I had made previously only one trip up to 272, which is about twelve miles; and without lights on the dark highways, with much traffic going up and returning, it is sometimes by pure luck that a fellow gets by.

Many drivers as well as their horses get excited, and when passing "Dead-Man's Turn" and "Shell-Hole-Hollow" everybody has steam up. In addition, when half the route has been gone over, the batteries are at our rear, so that, with the racket from the trucks, the roar of



MARRE — THE CORNER WHERE KELLEY WAS KILLED AND SANDERS  
WOUNDED IN SEPTEMBER OF 1916



THE STONE ABRI AT MARRE, 1917



## SECTION TWO

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the guns, and the whistling of the shells through the heavens, it certainly does seem as though hell were let loose. Then, too, the landscape all about us is so desolate! Montzéville and Esnes are terribly shot up — trees cut down, not a house standing complete, and débris filling the streets; so that in a general state of depression our thoughts continually rest on our tires, expecting at any moment a blow-out, which means a half-hour's job in the "God-forsaken burg," as we call it.

I have had an interesting "twenty-four hours'" service, which proved to be thirty-six hours, during these few days that our division has been *en repos*. We were kept on the go, each making 300 kilometres. Our two cars made several trips to the many surrounding towns between here and Vaubécourt, Révigny, and Bar-le-Duc. Back here far behind the lines, it is quite a pleasure to be able to drive at night with lights. Révigny, by the way, is approached via the Argonne — a picturesque country it is still, though there are the many destroyed villages and towns, and farms dotted with graves of the fallen heroes of the Marne.

The other night it was raining in torrents when I struck Bar at 1 A.M., with one *malade*, a victim of a mad dog's bite. Much to my surprise the *entrée pour malades* was apparently closed, so there was nothing for me to do but climb up over the parapet, Jean Valjean style, and rouse the sleepy *brancardier*, who hastily opened the *porte*, and then I made my get-away in the long trip back to Rampont, some fifty-five kilometres.

It is a great life, full of interesting happenings here with the soldiers; long trips, including many irregular and unexpected daily episodes; sometimes eating at camp, often at a field hospital kitchen; always finding a way out of a tight fix, even though for a moment all looks black; while things are made all the better by the fact that we have some bully good fellows here, the spirit and the work of the squad being such that it is a great satisfaction to be a member thereof.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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Neuilly, December 13, 1916

ON October 23 last, during a bombardment in a French village, Fromeréville, I was hit in the leg by a fragment of a shell which exploded a few feet in front of my car. Fortunately the car was empty, as I had just returned from a trip to the field hospital, and was turning about to load up again at the *poste de secours*. Fortunately, too, the *éclat* did not fracture the bone. Quickly stopping the car, which was but a few minutes away from an *abri* whither I managed to crawl, the doctors applied a bandage, and a few minutes later I was on a stretcher. Afterwards I was informed that two *brancardiers* were killed and eight of us in the town wounded. Mine was the only car on duty at the moment of the bombardment as my comrade had left some time before on a call to a village ten kilometres back. After three weeks at the small field hospital, during which time the piece of shell was extracted, I was brought to our hospital, the American Ambulance here at Neuilly, where I am making such progress that I am trusting to resume active service with my Section at Verdun very soon, if by the will of God I am able.

WILLIAM H. C. WALKER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Hingham, Massachusetts; enlisted in the Field Service, December, 1915; became a member of Section Two, at Pont-à-Mousson; wounded at Verdun, October, 1916; left the Field Service, August, 1917, and enlisted in the Canadian Field Artillery; honorably discharged from the Canadian Forces, December, 1917, in consequence of physical disability.



## X

### MUD AND RATS AT RAMPONT

UNTIL November 8, the Section continued to wallow in the mud of Rampont, and it was "some mud." It clung in great clots to our shoes, thence to our puttees, our overcoats and to everything we possessed, including ourselves. It was on this date that we packed up and moved to Ville-sur-Cousances, where, for living quarters, we had barracks, large and airy; so airy in fact that we soon found that our beds were the only warm places. The "General" clung to his tent which he pitched off to the east in the windiest place he could find, and yet managed to keep himself warmer than any one else in the outfit; and five o'clock always brought a hungry crowd to his tent-flap clamoring to be admitted for tea. These barracks would have been passable enough had we been the only creatures present, but we were far from being alone in our glory. Rats were our rivals; rats of all sizes, small, large, fat and thin. They were present in ever-increasing numbers, making our days doleful with discoveries of half-eaten cakes of chocolate, biscuits, and cheeses, and our nights hideous with an uproar that sounded like Charlie Chaplin in a tin-can factory. Olympic games were their specialty, followed by social dinners at the Ritz, as MacIntyre's store of supplies might have been aptly termed.

Our *postes* remained the same, Marre and Hill 272. The weather also remained the same, — rain, sleet, snow and high winds. Roads were about the only thing that changed and they grew worse and worse. Because of the bad weather we had plenty of work to do, — ten cars on duty regularly with extra cars on call and frequently the White truck. Under the circumstances, Diemer, the American mechanic, and Saintot, the French mechanic, were kept

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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busy changing broken rear axles, broken rear springs, broken front springs, broken radiators, bent mud-guards, and all other parts that came in contact with foreign bodies on dark, rainy nights. The crowning achievement of these mechanics was the changing of an entire rear axle at Marre, in the pitch darkness of a rainy night, without a single light to help them, as Marre was exactly six hundred yards from the Boche lines and of course no lights could be used.

### MORT HOMME — GLORIEUX — LA GRANGE-AUX-BOIS

ON December 28, the Boches "pulled off" an attack on the Mort Homme which kept us fairly busy for one night; but outside of that there was little to note other than the routine work, during which we were looked after with infinite kindness by the non-commissioned officers of the *G.B.D.*, who, every morning at 3 A.M., at Marre, shared with us drivers a five-course dinner, — and a very welcome meal it was, after a long night's work. At Fromeréville, whatever they had was ours and we were as members of a large family. These are things which none of us will ever forget.

On January 10 the Section moved for a short *repos* to barracks at Glorieux, and had perhaps two or three calls a day to camps where the different regiments of the division were located; but the greater part of our time was spent in Verdun walking about the city.

On January 19, 1917, we again packed up our ever-increasing and never-decreasing baggage and fled over icy roads to La Grange-aux-Bois in the Argonne, where we were allotted two large rooms, one good, the other bad.

The Section being divided at this time into two squads, it was quite obvious that one squad would inevitably draw the poor room, and as violent argument seemed imminent, the "General" and Harry Iselin decided to flip a coin for it. Much to our disgust, the "General," with true British nonchalance, lost the toss, and those of

us who were in his squad started out immediately to locate other and better quarters. Most of us were successful — Conquest, Struby, Heilbuth, and I getting palatial chambers with electric lights and a southern exposure. Without boasting I should say that we had discovered the Fifth Avenue of La Grange-aux-Bois. MacIntyre and Wheeler contented themselves with what might possibly be called Madison Avenue, while the "General," Bigelow and MacLaughlan — and I make this statement with no reservations of any kind whatsoever — lived in a snug little rat-infested attic on the Bowery.

### WORK IN THE ARGONNE

FROM this time on our life was an easy one. We had only two main *postes*, one up in the woods, Sept Fontaines — later changed to Chardon, the other in a beautiful valley at the Abbaye de Chalade. For the first few days we worked another *poste*, Le Chalet, nearer the lines, but the Germans as usual became most unpleasant and nearly "finished off" several of our cars as well as several of our drivers.

As there was practically no work here, it was decided to send cars there only on call from La Chalade, with the immediate result that there were no more close "squeaks," — at least not for some time. The Boches picked a quarrel with La Chalade and shelled the district intermittently, but beyond planting a few shells in the buildings and peppering one car with éclats, succeeded in doing no damage. During our five months' rest cure in the Argonne, the only casualty suffered by the Section occurred in the afternoon of April 25, when Raymond Whitney was bitten in an unmentionable part of his anatomy by a large black dog. This severe wound was cauterized at the hospital amidst the cheers of the assembled drivers.

As the spring advanced, rumor as to our leaving the Argonne followed rumor. First we were to go to Saint-Mihiel, then to the Champagne, and finally we were

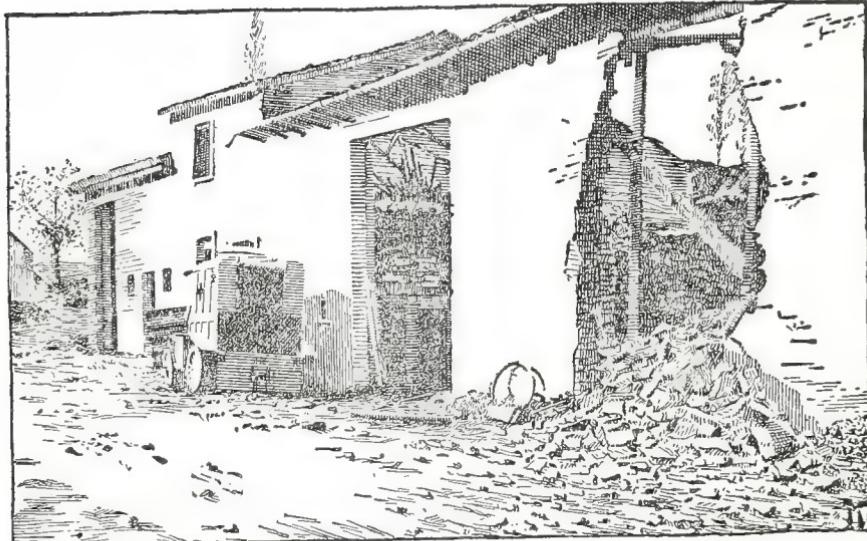
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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relieved by Section Nineteen, which arrived on May 25th when we were put *en repos* to await further orders.

JOHN E. BOIT<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Brookline, Massachusetts; Harvard, '12; joined Section Two in May, 1916; became *Sous-Chef*; subsequently was a First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## XI

### THE SUMMER OF 1917

FROM La Grange-aux-Bois we were ordered to Dombasle-en-Argonne; and great was the rejoicing; for after five months of inactivity and monotony, the prospect of active service was a pleasant one. We reached Dombasle on June 25 without incident, and after turning out Section Fifteen, took up their quarters in a large building at the edge of the town. They had fixed up the place to the *n*th degree of comfort, with a shower-bath, garden, pavilion, and in fact all the modern conveniences. Hence it was with a well-satisfied air and an anticipatory smile that we settled down in what seemed the best quarters we had ever had. Before Section Fifteen left, the members assured us of "easy work" and a "quiet time enjoyed by all," and left us to the working out of our own damnation.

### THE EX-VILLAGE OF ESNES

THERE is no use describing the ex-village of Esnes to those members of the Field Service who have seen it; and as a corollary, there is no use in describing it to those members of the Service who have not seen it, for they have had it described to them *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. Suffice it to say that Esnes was our *poste* and it lay under the Côte 304 and in full view of the Mort Homme — and the seeing was fairly good in those days. We have never yet found out whether our friends of Section Fifteen were amusing themselves at our expense or not, about the prophesied "quiet time" which we were to have there. Anyway, shortly after our arrival we found ourselves in the midst of one of the nicest little parties ever given on the Verdun front, and there are those who claim that they have seen "some parties" on said front. It seems that the Boches had been meditating the pro-

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spective taking-back of various portions of Côte 304 which they had lost previously and elected June 29 as the most propitious time to try to do so. Whatever faults the Boche may or may not have, and we do not claim that he is without them, one of them was not to let things stagnate on the Verdun front. So for the next three days we had ten cars continuously on duty, and what is more, they were running continuously.

This at the front. Meanwhile, events at the rear were not entirely devoid of interest. The Section, or rather the part of it which was not up at the *poste* was at supper when something suspiciously like an *arrivée* was heard in the immediate vicinity. The "older" men looked at one another, the rookies looked at the "General,"<sup>1</sup> who went on with his soup. A second came in, still closer; then a third which knocked the plaster from the ceiling, a generous piece of which fell in the "General's" soup. He rose, calmly looked round and muttered, "Well, I'll be damned," — and left those parts. He did n't run, for that would have been undignified, but he simply left — and he was n't the last to reach the shelter of a neighboring and friendly haystack some hundred yards off out in the open.

We moved camp that night with never a sigh for our late palatial and very unhealthy quarters. What with Boche attacks and French counter-attacks, we found little time to do anything but eat, sleep, and work, and for the entire period from June 29 until July 18, when our Division, the 73d, finally ended that particular chapter of Verdun history by making one big and very successful attack, retaking all the ground which had been lost and taking many prisoners, the Section did all the evacuations for these several attacks and won for itself a Divisional Citation — the second from this Division.

<sup>1</sup> Francis D. Ogilvie, a Britisher, of Lindfield, Sussex, who was *Sous-Chef* and later *Chef* of the Section, and who, when the United States entered the war, transferred to the British Ambulance Service.

### THE DEATH OF HARMON CRAIG

FOR us, the most tragic part of the whole summer came on July 15, when Harmon Craig was killed at Dombasle. After having gone over some of the worst stretches of road in the whole sector for three weeks with a smile on his face and a jest on his lips, he was wounded at his *poste*, by the side of his car while it was being loaded, and died six hours later as bravely as he had lived. He was buried in the cemetery back of Ville-sur-Cousances, and as he was laid to rest, the guns behind Montzéville, roaring out a last farewell, sped the 73d over the top to avenge him.

### A PEACEFUL REPOS AT LIGNY-EN-BARROIS

ON July 23 we received our orders to leave, and with as much joy as we had arrived a month before, we packed up, and after a last visit to Craig's grave, set out for Nançois-le-Grand, a village of several hundred inhabitants seven kilometres from Ligny-en-Barrois, where we arrived, after a dusty run of several hours.

The quiet of the little town was as grateful to our nerves as the beauty of the surrounding country to our eyes, accustomed to desolation. After a month of hard work, it was good to lie in our cars, for we lived in our cars, which were drawn up in a field, happy in the assurance that five or ten of us would n't have to hurry up to the front and after thinking great calm thoughts, serve the best interests of the country by drifting off to sleep, not to awaken until 10.30 the next morning. It was good to lie under the trees and meditate, or simply to lie under the trees. It was good to stroll in the dusk and finally wind up a perfect day with a perfect omelette. In short, it was Paradise!

Then after a week of this pastoral life, as the charms of the succulent omelette gave way to those of the fragrant grape, wine and wassail became the order of the day. Who can adequately describe the farewell parties of Walker, or do justice to the entertaining which Whitney

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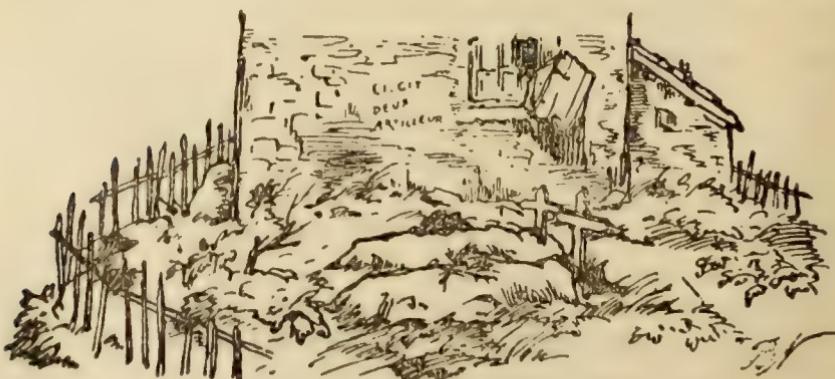
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furnished on that occasion? Who can describe the farewell parties of Whitney and Whytlaw and the eloquent farewell speeches, made on these occasions, or the still more eloquent responses by MacIntyre, that "prince of *bon vivants*"? What pen could picture the joys of whympus hunts, commenced precisely at 12.01 P.M.; of crap games commencing at reveille (10.30 A.M.) and lasting until taps (12.30 A.M.); of swimming parties in the canal, which invariably ended at the Café de la Meuse at Tronville? Who can declare our elation at the decoration of Whitney, Ames, and the "Mec," a condition of affairs which naturally called for another party? And finally, how can we relate how deeply our hearts were touched when we found that our cars had been decorated by the girls of the village as the short weeks of *repos* came to a close on August 16?

We left for Sommaise that day, and I think we may say with truth that our departure was regretted by the entire village; certainly we regretted departing, and look back on those five short weeks as on a pleasant dream of golden sunshine, green hills, and France in summertime. We remained at Sommaise three days, after which we followed our new Division, the 48th, to Souhesme.

HENRY D. M. SHERRED<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Haddonfield, New Jersey; Princeton, '17; enlisted in the Field Service in May, 1917; served in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service until the end of the war.



## XII

### IN LINE AT VERDUN

Ville-sur-Cousances, Thursday, June 28, 1917

WE were now brought face to face with the reality of the coming offensive, and began to appreciate on what an enormous and terrifying scale a modern attack is carried out. As soon as we reached the main road we came upon an endless line of *camions* all rumbling along in the darkness, each filled with infantry to its uttermost capacity, the men being jammed in like cattle. There were also guns, huge guns such as I have never seen in the Argonne. For three hours we kept passing this solemn parade of men and cannon. At each cross-road were stationed officers and sentinels with shrouded lanterns who directed and urged on the procession. Most of the men were riding in silence, many even managing to sleep in their awkward positions; but occasionally we passed a *camion* whose crew was chanting some weird song of war or love. I am told that this concentration of men has been going on for many days. Here at Cousances the whole atmosphere is impregnated with the vague imminence of an approaching offensive.

This region is totally different from the Argonne where we were before. The country is barren and deserted and the fields of stubble stretch for miles along the white and dusty roads. The sun is burning everything and the thick white alkali dust gives all objects a gray and withered appearance. We no longer see the beautiful rich green of the Argonne vegetation. Everything seems baked and dead. Every three or four miles one comes upon a small ruined village, now deserted. The whole region has been blasted by shells; nowhere does the country fail to remind one of the terrible struggle that has been going on for so long in this sector. Cousances, itself nothing but a

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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group of wrecked houses, is quite close to the front, and there is certainly much more activity here than in our former sector.

Putting it literally, this Section was baptized in fire as soon as it reached here, for to-night about eight-thirty a despatch-rider came tearing up to the *bureau* on his motor-cycle and said that the Boches were attacking at Hill 304. So instantly we began to hustle around and prepare for heavy work.

Harper and I were the first to leave, he being the driver and myself orderly. As we passed out of Cousances we saw several artillery field pieces hurrying up the road toward the first lines, and later passed two battalions of the 346th drawn up by the roadside and ready to be sent ahead. A heavy rain was falling and frequent flashes of lightning lit up the country; but the night was not very dark and we had little difficulty in keeping on the road, which is well screened all the way. But of course we could not use any lights. French batteries on both sides of us were firing steadily, and the whistle of the departing shells was incessant; but we heard no Boche shells coming in. At the *poste* we found the Lieutenant hurriedly giving directions to the fellows, and heard that the French were to counter-attack at daybreak.

### HELL'S CORNER

No *blessés* had come in as yet but many were expected. Before long Whytlaw came down with a load and Harper and I started up to relieve him. I had heard a lot about the danger of this *poste*, and in no detail was it exaggerated. The road is covered with stones which have been hurriedly thrown into shell-holes, and there were also many new holes which had not been filled in. For over a mile after making "Hell's Corner" we are in plain sight of the Boche trenches. We can see their star shells start from the ground, and it seems as if they exploded directly over our heads. The road is being shelled all the time but one can never go fast on account of the danger



PANEL FROM AN AMBULANCE SHOWING THE FAMOUS  
CRESCENT OF THE MOROCCAN DIVISION  
WHICH SECTION TWO SERVED



## SECTION TWO

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of these shell-holes. We passed trucks, and some squads of infantry which were difficult to see in the darkness. By this time the din of the cannonading was terrific and the bursting of the Boche shells occurred at no very comfortable distance.

The road grew worse and worse, and finally it became almost impassable. I doubt if any car but a Ford could ever make that trip at night. I did n't go sightseeing at all, but having reached our destination, made a fairly straight line toward the *abri*, where we learned that Bixby's car had just been smashed by a shell while standing in the yard and would be useless for the rest of the night. We were also told that the Boches had just dropped in some gas bombs, and we were ordered to be sure that our masks were in readiness. Ray and I, the first to go back after having a brief smoke in the shelter of the *abri*, carried an *assis* and two *couchés*. We breathed a lot more easily after once gaining "Hell's Corner," and accomplished the rest of the trip without mishap. It was after two when we got back here. But as a counter-attack was expected we had to await word and be ready to start out again any minute. So both of us simply crawled into our car and managed to fall asleep very easily. We slept soundly until the Lieutenant woke us and told us to go to bed as we probably should n't be needed.

### HEAVY WORK DURING AN ATTACK

*Sunday, July 1*

IT is now three days since the attack commenced and it appears to be still going on. There are Boche attacks and then French counter-attacks, then artillery duels, and then more attacks. As close as we are to the lines, we know very little of what happens, or who is winning. The losses have been terrible on both sides, but this does not mean that the attacks have failed. Our Section has been working at a terrific pace. I am so tired that the events of the past few days seem all confused and even unreal. It is such a wonderful relief to be sitting way back here

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in perfect safety and with no responsibilities that I feel as if I had just recovered from a long sickness. I slept quite late Friday after the hard work of the night before, and after rising had little to do for the rest of the day; both sides had ceased activities for the time, and we heard but little firing until evening. But we were warned to be prepared for a large dose at night, as the French were scheduled to attempt a rush on their lost positions.

About 6.30, just after the dinner gong had rung and as I was leaving my room, there was suddenly a "swish-bang" and a big shell exploded on the opposite side of the road, about fifty yards from our headquarters. Of course I flopped on the ground as soon as I heard the warning whistle, and then rising, proceeded with more or less undignified hustle for the *abri* under our main building. Everybody else thought of the very same place and joined in the general stampede. In about three minutes another came in and we could hear the *éclats* flying about outside and clipping pieces of stone off the houses. After a few more shells the Boches let up on us for awhile and we went upstairs and began dinner. But we had n't finished our soup before they started dropping again, the first one so startling us that we spilled more or less soup around the room. We continued eating, however, until suddenly there was a terrific explosion followed by a horrible crunching sound of falling bricks and plaster. A shell larger than the others had struck the house, or what remained of the house, directly opposite our building. It would have been foolish for us to remain where we were, because our building, already tottering from the effects of many shellings, might bury us alive if one of those big *marmites* ever landed squarely on it. The *abri* was also a dangerous place, being very poorly made and liable to cave in upon us. The safest place, therefore, was out doors; so we all streaked for a field which was well removed from all the crumbling foundations which made up this village and which are ready to fall almost from

## SECTION TWO

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the mere concussion of a large shell. We gathered behind a large haystack where already several others had collected, and waited. The shells came in regularly, every once in a while striking some building and reducing it to still further ruin. One landed about thirty yards from the big tent where twenty of us sleep and we later found over a dozen rips in the canvas, some big enough to admit one's body. No shells came near enough, however, to do any damage; but at every explosion one had to lie flat in order to avoid the flying *éclats*.

At seven-fifteen, the time set for those on duty to start for the *poste*, the shells were coming in about every minute. So there was nothing to do but to streak for our cars which were in front of the main building, near which the majority of the shells were landing, and to make as quick a get-away as possible. The "General" and Reed left first and the last we saw of them they were hurrying very ungracefully over the rough field to where the cars were, about 250 yards away. The Lieutenant then told Newcomb and myself to get ready and to leave as soon as the next shell landed. So we lined up as if we were runners waiting for the sound of the starting pistol, and, as soon as the "R-R-ang" came, in we legged it. One shell came in while we were running and we both went down on our bellies. We gained the house before the next one landed and then waited for it. It came in too close for comfort and then I went out and cranked my car while Newcomb ran back to his shack for his coat.

Just as I got the motor started I received one of the biggest scares of my life. A shell came in and burst so close that I thought surely it had me. I was just getting into the car and so could not flop. I was hit by the flying earth and falling stones thrown up by the shell, which struck the car in several places, one piece even striking and glancing off my helmet. Newcomb, who then appeared, looked surprised to see me still alive; and before the next shell landed, we were well down the road

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and both joined in a long-drawn-out sigh of genuine relief.

The French attack had now fairly commenced and on all sides of us the batteries were pounding away. Not for a moment did the screeching of shells and the roaring of guns cease. At one point John Ames and I clambered up on a ruined house and took a look over the country. It was a view I shall never forget. Our task is comparatively small, and we are prepared to do it faithfully. Nine cars are lined up ready to cover the attack, and the drivers and their orderlies stand waiting orders. The Lieutenant is here directing us and planning the shifts and reliefs.

The road which we have to go over is the most damnable stretch I have ever known. As fast as the old shell-holes are filled in with stones, new ones are made. As we drive along in the darkness, straining our eyes to keep the car out of holes and ditches, the noise of the French batteries and German shells is deafening. Far down the road we see a flash followed by a roar. It is German shrapnel and we crouch instinctively in our seats as we realize that in another minute we shall be passing over that spot. In back of us is an explosion and flying rocks and earth are scattered about the slowly moving car. We can't go faster because of the condition of the road, although instinct cries out to us to open the throttle and streak for our destination. We plod slowly along, trying to talk unconcernedly and longing for the termination of the ride.

We pass through the town and enter the driveway of a fallen château, the cellar of which is now used for a *poste de secours*. This driveway is about fifty yards long. To look at it one would say it was impassable, but over those rocks and stones and through the shell-holes we go. This is the most dangerous place of all, and so often do the shells fall that no one ever ventures out to repair the road. We have to slow down practically to a standstill, and crawl and bump our way along. How I hate the sight of this

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place. It is all so cruel and relentless — the wrecked houses, the torn-up roads, and the huge shell-holes, some of the older ones half filled with stagnant water. Here and there a wagon which has been struck sprawled by the roadside. It is a scene of sickening desolation.

I made the first trip to Esnes with Newcomb as orderly. It had not yet grown dark, so we easily passed by the shell-holes. When we reached Esnes we had to take our gas-masks from their cases and wear them about our necks, ready to put them on when passing through the gassed area. They served us well, and in less than two minutes we could remove them and breathe fresh air again, but our eyes burned from the poisonous fumes. The odor of the stuff left us horribly depressed. It has a sickeningly sweet smell like that of over-ripe fruit and makes one's lungs feel as if some heavy weight had been imposed on them.

### THE DAY AFTER THE ATTACK

IT is the day after an attack that our hardest work takes place. The wounded men are brought in continuously and we have more than we can handle. In this instance, I had to stay on all day. I grew dizzy with the monotony of the work. Several of my wounded were Boches and I found a little comfort in managing to get from them a steel helmet and a couple of buttons as souvenirs. The attack was something of a failure and every one was horribly low-spirited. Some of our *blessés* were frightfully mangled. The dead at the *poste* were so numerous that many were lying around the yard uncovered and uncared-for. It is sights such as this that have a terribly depressing effect upon one's morale.

I thought I could go back and rest at seven o'clock after having worked twenty-four hours without any sleep, with only a little cold canned meat to eat. I was tired, and, moreover, felt very low-spirited. But word came that another big attack was to be made that evening, so I had to stay on and work. Some of the other

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fellows who had been on duty much longer than myself simply had to leave and return for rest. At nine the artillery duel commenced and it was worse even than the firing of the previous evening. Some large naval guns opened up on the German positions and it seemed as if the earth must split open so great was the shock of the explosion. At eleven the Boches started shelling and we all retired to the *abris*. The shells were big ones and the *éclats* from them flew for almost a quarter of a mile. Going up to the lines under that bombardment was no simple task. I managed to get an hour's sleep about four in the morning, dozing off as I sat in the *abri* waiting for my turn.

About five I went up and upon returning saw a terrible sight. A caisson or artillery truck had been hit by a shell about four o'clock and three men had been killed and one wounded. Of the six horses, four were killed, and the other two untouched. This happened right on our road over which we had been going back and forth all night. The dead men were terribly disfigured and presented a horrible sight. When I reached my destination with my load I found Whitney there asleep. He had brought down a load and was so fatigued that he had to have a short nap before returning to work. We both decided that we could not go on and so asked for men to relieve us. There were several fresh men just starting, so we drove to the camp and both rolled in for a long sleep. I had driven thirty-five hours with three very scanty meals of cold canned meat and bread and less than two hours' sleep. When I got back, my brother Jack reminded me that it was my birthday.

Monday, July 2

SLEPT most of yesterday and feel greatly rested. Am scheduled to work to-night. At noon to-day Whytlaw came in. He says that the Boches are shelling every car that goes by "Hell's Corner." Dresser's car was pierced, just over his head, several times by *éclats*, but he was not

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touched. This morning when about eight shells dropped in at once the *aumônier* was badly wounded, and my brother took him to the hospital in a critical condition. All the cars have had narrow escapes and have been hit by flying earth and stone.

### A SHORT REST

Ville-sur-Cousances, Wednesday, July 4

It certainly is a relief to be back here again after twenty-four hours in that hole. It is great to feel perfectly safe all day long and never to hear an *obus* or smell any gas. I was orderly this time and it was a terrible job. It is no joke spending twenty-four hours in sight of Mort Homme. Monday night the Boches shelled us, dropping in "210's" every minute. A *poilu* was wounded in front of our *abri*. I was in the room when his wound was dressed. The air outside was so thick with dust that had been kicked up that we could n't see the cars. I don't mind admitting that my knees were shaking when we got a call to go up. I rode up with Reed and though only one shell came in on the trip, it was a big one and not too far away. I managed to get three hours' sleep although they were shelling all around us. Four of us were cooped, two in a bed, in a little black, stuffy room in the cellar of the château.

As you come around "Hell's Bend," you get an excellent view of Mort Homme. It is a fearful place and one can always see there the smoke from shells rising and floating slowly away. There are no trees, no houses, no sign of any living thing on that bare shell-racked stretch of land. Several new holes were put in our road to-day, but we had no really narrow escapes. The château where the *poste* is located has been hammered again and again by shells. Most of its western wall is still standing, and it is behind this meagre protection that we pull up and leave our cars. Only the cellar of the house can be used and very few ever venture out of the court, where our cars are, for more than a minute. Not fifty yards from where we sleep is the morgue, a room where the dead are

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placed when brought in from the trenches. Sometimes when the losses have been great, the corpses are piled one upon the other until the room is so full that many dead are left on stretchers in the court. We certainly are being continually impressed with the most horrible side of war.

*Monday, July*

WE are expecting a French attack within a few days; so huge guns go rumbling toward the front. The attack when it comes will be enormous.

Resting again, and getting my car in good condition. My last period of work was very easy. I had only one trip, which came about 3.30 A.M. On my last drive up, with Ames as orderly, we played tag with a half-dozen shells, one digging a big hole in the road five seconds after we passed over the place. There is a great deal of activity on Mort Homme and we could see shells landing continually, the black smoke rising slowly from the scarred hill-side. Arrived at our destination, we ate beside the morgue, and the odor was sickening. Moreover, the room is very unprotected and often we are forced to interrupt our eating long enough to drop when a shell lands somewhere near. But the bedroom is worse. In a little dark hole where the sun and fresh air never penetrate, we are two in a bed, one above the other, with loose straw for mattresses. The straw is damp and "earthy" and is alive with fleas. Everybody is beginning to be troubled by fleas, even those who have been insisting that they were never bothered by these pests now scratching and scratching with the best of us. This is where we sleep when a lull gives us a short *repos*; but one can't sleep there, one merely drops, if fortunate, into a spasmodic and feverish sub-consciousness. The inconvenience of resting two in a bed combined with the noise of the shells outside, make complete rest an impossible luxury. I shall never forget those moments as we lay there waiting for our next call. Nor shall I forget some of the conversations we had,

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embracing all possible topics, but usually falling somewhere between the horrors of war and the pleasures that we promised ourselves when it should be over.

On the road last night three more men were killed and eight wounded. Between ten o'clock and one the road was shelled heavily because of the *ravitaillement* which goes up to the lines at that time. Naturally this is the moment when we least enjoy trips. Two more cars, my brother's and Freer's, were hit by *éclats* last night when a shell burst in the courtyard.

### THE IMPEDIMENTA OF ATTACK

*Tuesday, July 10*

JUST as I got into bed last night I was called out to go for two *blessés* at a distant town. It was pouring and there was no moon; so the trip was not too pleasant, especially since the road was new to me. Boit had a narrow escape at the cross-road to-day. Everything is in a fever of excitement here, for the attack is due to start to-night or to-morrow morning. Over 4000 big guns are clustered on this bank of the Meuse ready to drench the German lines when the word comes. The bombardment will probably start to-morrow and as I am going up to the *poste* to-night I will be present at a wonderful and mighty spectacle. The roads will be riddled by German shells. They have been shelling all around here to-day and shells landed in the road this side of the place. Section Sixty-Seven with the big Fiat trucks will carry the wounded on portions of the way, thereby helping a great deal.

*Thursday, July 12*

THE attack has not yet begun, although the Lieutenant said to-day that everything was in readiness. The recent rain has caused so much mud that assaulting the hill would be a difficult job. I have been at the *poste* for twenty-four hours, but there was very little work. I had two trips during the night which kept me from sleeping, but then I had a good long rest, not stirring from eight in the

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morning until eight at night. There were many French aeroplanes up directing the fire. A German spy was caught in the lines this morning. He had a uniform of the 346th Regiment which had been replaced by the present regiment; so that he was quickly spotted. He will be shot to-morrow. Did not get chummy with any shells except once during lunch, when five landed just outside our eating-room. One was very close, exploding right in the courtyard. But the earth was soft after all the rain and the *éclats* did not spread. However, we all did the "Kelleys" and finished our meal in the cellar. Last night the Boches shelled our front line trenches. With "210's" they pulverized the place. Fifty men and an officer were buried when a shell closed up an *abri*, and as yet they have not been rescued. No one can find where the *abri* was located, the place is so changed. The French positions on Mort Homme and on 304 are now absolutely untenable. From their higher positions the Boches can sweep our trenches at will with their big guns, those on Mort Homme having a side range on the French trenches in front of the Hill. The sun has been out all day and the country is getting a good drying; so the artillery may open up at any time. Fifteen new batteries were set up just outside of here last night. Freeborn, our *Chef*, who has been away for a month, returned to us yesterday. He is very popular and we were all glad to see him again.

July 14

WE are the third section to have covered this *poste* since Christmas and as yet not a man has been hurt, so that, considering our country is at war, we get off pretty easily. It is fascinating work especially during an attack when all the batteries are blasting away in one prolonged roar. When I stand at our *poste* and hear that terrible din, I take my hat off to the line of men at the very front who are charging bravely across "No Man's Land" in disregard of those murderous shells. The men in the infantry



DOMBASLE-EN-ARGONNE, JUNE, 1917. THE VILLAGE WHERE  
HARMON CRAIG WAS KILLED



THE STREET "CORVÉE" IN A WAR-ZONE VILLAGE, FROMERREVILLE, 1917



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are the bravest in the war and I think that this war calls for more real bravery and endurance than any that has ever been fought.

HARMON B. CRAIG<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston; Class of 1919 at Harvard; was killed on July 15, 1917, the day following the last entry from his diary given above. Engaged in loading an ambulance with wounded, at Dombasle, an eight-inch German shell fell close to the spot where his car was standing, killing three men outright and wounding two others. Craig, who received a very severe wound in the right thigh and three or four smaller ones in other parts of the body, was discovered lying in an *abri* — how he reached it is not known — and was directing the attendance of the other wounded whom he considered more vitally hurt. When finally taken to the hospital, it was found necessary to amputate his right leg. But he was too weak to recover from the shock. General Corvisart, who commanded the Sixteenth French Army Corps where Craig was serving, thus refers to him in an official citation: "This American volunteer was a very conscientious and cool driver, who, on every occasion when under the fire of the enemy's artillery, showed devotion to the wounded and disdain of danger, while displaying the greatest energy in accomplishing his duty on June 28 and 29, on a highway which was being bombarded." Craig's brother, John, also served with distinction in the Field Service and later became an artillery officer in the French Army.



### XIII

#### AFTER THE FRENCH ATTACK AT VERDUN AUGUST, 1917

DURING the third week in August the long-expected French effort to regain Hill 304 and Mort Homme took place, and our Section was moved up for the attack. It was a dusty ride we had from Sommaise to Souhesme where our proposed cantonment was — a field behind some barracks housing a few troops of our new Division. It was an interesting sight to see the different soldiers prepare to leave for the trenches. They did not seem at all dispirited; indeed one swarthy Arab with ribbons denoting the several decorations on his breast grinned broadly and caressed his gun-butt with a lean brown hand. Then tents were dug out from the recesses of the Renault and we set them up. Supper came next and after that the first ten cars were called out to take their stand at Sivry-la-Perche, the camp of a French sanitary section with whom we were to work. Boit, *Sous-Chef*, was in charge of the party. I managed to squeeze in through the kindness of the Lieutenant and rode with him in his staff car. The night passed without any untoward event obtaining. In the morning all guns seemed to cease and we were ordered to the *postes*, and glad we were to go. The ground being familiar to many of us, we helter-skeltered to the *postes*, but found to our surprise that what we had known as front line *postes* were no longer such. The French storming troops had been so successful that we evacuated the wounded from what is known as Chattancourt Ravine, a devilishly difficult bit of manoeuvring even for Fords; but we managed as usual to go through with whatever was asked of us. Boit and I stayed up at this place and assisted the stretcher-bearers. So engrossed were we in the task of loading and getting off the various cars that

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we noticed with surprise, when a lull in the coming in of wounded gave us time to look round, that there was no one there but we two and some two hundred Boches,—prisoners who had been doing *brancardier* work. I remember Boit glancing at me in a funny way and I'm sure I appeared scared when I whispered, "Good Lord, Winnie, what'll we do if they start for us?" "Run," he replied, and at that we both laughed and spent the rest of the morning ordering the Boches hither and thither to our vast satisfaction. It was an amusing situation.

For two days we worked this ravine and then, the French positions having been consolidated, we had regular *postes*. One was at Ferme-la-Claire, and the other at Chattancourt Station, or what was left of it. In the near distance could be seen Cumières, which the French had taken, and which looked like anything but a town, hardly a stone left standing upright, and near the entrance of the village several great holes made by the French "400's." Shelling was intermittent here and, at first, gas attacks not infrequent. The La Claire *poste* was given up after a few days and all the wounded were handled from the Chattancourt *poste*.

We kept four cars on duty, three at Marre and one at the station, the others relieving successively as trips became more frequent. During the first few weeks of September, the Boches showed an extreme antipathy to Marre. At all hours of the day or night they bombarded the town. During the first real bombardment, our fellows had to roam the streets, having no *abri* to take shelter in. Many cars received *éclats* and two were quite demolished. It was an exciting period. The Boches seemed to delight in shelling the place just as reliefs arrived and many a wild dash was made through the "Place de l'Opéra," as we called the main square of the town.

About this time rumors became current of the "taking over" by the U.S. Army of the Field Service and many of the arguments, pro and con, anent the proposition awoke echoes. It seemed to be the consensus of opinion

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that we had earned the right to be a free body and not to lose our identity in the vastness of enlistment. However, came to pass the inevitable, and on September 26, 1917, at Sivry-la-Perche, old S.S.U.Two became a U.S.A. Ambulance Service Section and thirteen members signed up as enlisted men in the U.S. Army. It was a sad affair and we did n't relish it a bit; but we knew that our Section whatever they might make it, would do business as S.S.U.Two and try to continue in the confidence of our kindest Allies, the French.

EWEN MACINTYRE, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; joined Section Two of the Service September 30, 1916; later First Lieutenant, U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## XIV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION Two, now Six-Twenty-Six, was attached to the 48th Division, made up of zouaves and Algerians on August 17, 1917, and stayed with the same Division right up to the time of going home. From the above date we worked for three months on the left bank of the Meuse above Verdun, and then changed over to the right bank, with *postes* at Vacherauville, Bras, and two *postes* nearer the lines which were only *abris*. While we worked on the left bank, our cantonment was a barn near Sivry-la-Perche. On December 1, it was changed to a school building at Glorieux. We stayed on the right bank for a month, and then the Division went *en repos* near Wassy, which town was the cantonment for the Section. After three weeks the Division was ordered south, and eventually reached a point south of the Toul sector and was placed in reserve. We were cantoned in the village of Bettoncourt from January 26 to February 8. Then we moved to Nancy, where we were cantoned in the hospital barracks at Essey from February 8 until March 15.

After making a number of moves in a general northerly direction, we finally reached the front at Soissons, and took over the lines in front of Coucy-le-Château on April 11, 1918. We were cantoned in *abris* on the hillside above the village of Fontenoy. *Postes* were established in Pont Saint-Mard, Mont Givry, Trosly, and the Ferme Bonne Maison. The Division was drawn from the lines on May 8, as Algerian fever was spreading so rapidly that there were scarcely enough officers to carry on the work. The Section was cantoned at Pernant, near Soissons, from May 8 to 15, and then moved north, as the Division was ordered into reserve back of Arras. We were cantoned at Saint-Pol, where the nights were made unpleasant by the many air raids. After the one which took place on the night of May 29, in which the Section was in the centre of the bombarded zone, we moved into a near-by wood.

On June 3 the Division was ordered *en réserve* north of Meaux, at Acy-en-Multien, where the Section was cantoned until the 11th. The Division then took part in the counter-offensive which started on the morning of June 11 in the

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Montdidier sector. The cantonment for the Section during the attack was Grandvillers, and *postes*, as the line advanced, were established at Wacquemoulin, Neufvy, and the evacuations were to Saint-Remy and the château at Ravenel. During the attack the top was blown off one car, and two men, Newcomb and MacKenzie, were wounded. MacKenzie died two days later at the hospital in Beauvais. The Section went *en repos* on June 13, spending its time in the woods near Crépy-en-Valois.

On July 10, the Division took over the line in the woods, relieving old Section Four's Division. We worked the line just in front of Longpont. We took part in the Foch counter-attack of July 18. The Division stayed in until the morning of July 20, but the Section worked several days after that, helping old Section Four, and doing some evacuation work to Crépy-en-Valois. The Division was *en repos* until August 18, the Section being cantoned during that time in Chavres, Vivières, Chavres again, Grand Champ, Eméville, Chelles, and Pont Chevalier. The Division attacked again on the morning of August 20 in the Aisne and Oise offensive, being in line at Moulin-sous-Touvent. It stayed in line until September 1, when the lines were established in front of Coucy-le-Château. As the lines advanced, we had *postes* in Nampcel, Blérancourtelle, Blérancourt, Saint-Paul-aux-Bois, Trosly, and numerous *abris* in the hillsides between these two places. Shaw, Kendall, and McCreedy were wounded during this attack, and Iselin, Bender, and Russell.

On September 2, the Division went *en repos* near Coulommiers, the Section being cantoned at Chauffry. We left September 21 for a sector in the Champagne. We followed the attack of the 26th, and went into line on the 29th, where we stayed until October 16. As the line advanced, *postes* were established at Perthes, Tahure, Aure, Mars-sous-Bourcq, Semide, Contreuve, Grivy, and Loisy. The Section was cantoned along the road until October 12, when it took a cantonment near Semide, where it stayed until October 18. All evacuations were made to Bussy-le-Château. The division was *en repos* from October 16 until November 1, near Châlons-sur-Marne. We were cantoned at Saint-Germain la Ville. In November the Division went *en réserve* back of the lines near Vouziers. We were cantoned at Semide until the 7th, and then moved up, staying at Le Chesne, Grandes Armoises, and Chémery. It was while we were in Le Chesne that the Armistice was signed. The Division was just about to take over the line north of Chémery.

After the Armistice we followed the Germans through Bel-

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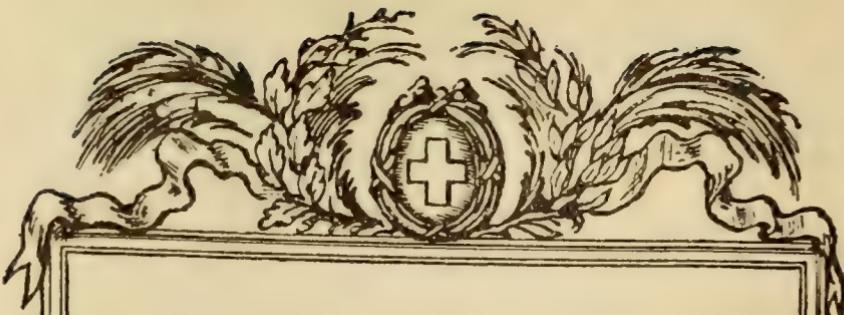
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gium and Luxembourg, stopping at Pouru-Saint-Remy, Florenville, Étalle, Belgium; Hermiskiel, Boppard, and Nassau, Germany. We crossed the Rhine during the afternoon of December 14 and were cantoned in Bad Nassau, where the Section appropriated a hotel. We stayed here until ordered in to Base Camp on March 5, 1919. We took our cars to a town near Mainz and turned them over to a new Section. Our Division was disbanded on the day we left for Base Camp, March 5.

EDWARD N. SECCOMBE<sup>1</sup>

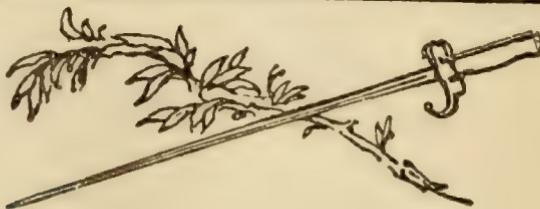
<sup>1</sup> Of Derby, Connecticut; served with the Field Service in Section Two, 1916, and in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service during the remainder of the war.





### IN MEMORIAM

LEIF NORMAN BARCLAY  
CARLETON BURR  
HARMON BUSHNELL CRAIG  
STEPHEN RAYMOND DRESSER  
VIVIAN DU BOUCHET  
DANFORTH B. FERGUSON  
CHARLES JAMES FREEBORN  
JOHN RALSTON GRAHAM  
JAMES ROGERS McCONNELL



## *Section Three*

### *I. On the Western Front*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. PRESTON LOCKWOOD
- II. TRACY J. PUTNAM
- III. WALDO PEIRCE
- IV. LUKE C. DOYLE  
STEPHEN GALATTI
- V. WALTER KERR RAINSFORD
- VI. ALWYN INNESS-BROWN
- VII. WILLIAM M. BARBER
- VIII. WALTER KERR RAINSFORD  
CHARLES R. CODMAN, JR.
- IX. EDWARD I. TINKHAM

### *II. In the Orient*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. CHARLES BAIRD, JR.
- II. LOVERING HILL
- III. ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE
- IV. LOVERING HILL  
DONALD C. ARMOUR
- J. MARQUAND WALKER
- JOHN MUNROE
- V. LOVERING HILL  
J. MARQUAND WALKER
- ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE
- VI. CHARLES BAIRD, JR.
- VII. CHARLES AMSDEN
- VIII. JOHN N. D'ESTE

## SUMMARY

SECTION THREE was organized in Paris in April, 1915, and sent to the French Seventh Army for trial. Within a fortnight it was assigned to duty in reconquered Alsace. The Section was quartered successively at Saint-Maurice-sur-Moselle, Mollau, and Moosch, and served twenty-five kilometres of front in the mountainous region between the valley of Metzeral and Thann. The sector included Hartmannsweilerkopf, for possession of which so many battles were fought in 1915. In February, 1916, the Section moved to Lorraine, where, although *en repos*, it performed evacuation work around Baccarat and Saint-Dié. In the middle of June it was moved to the great battle front of Verdun, where it did its part over the dangerous run to the *poste* at Bras. Early in July the Section, with its Division, went to Pont-à-Mousson, where it worked for three months in the woods of Bois le Prêtre.

With the beginning of the autumn of 1916, it was decided, owing to the request of the French Government for a section such as had been able to work in the mountains of Alsace, to send Section Three to the Balkans with the French Army of the Orient. Consequently it was ordered to Marseilles, sailing for Salonica October 20, and arriving in that city the 28th. In November the Section was assigned to the Monastir sector. Several times cars were detached and sent over into the wild, mountainous country of Albania to serve French troops there, and on one occasion the whole Section was sent to Greece with the French force ordered there to maintain Greece's neutrality. The Section remained in the Balkans until October, 1917, when the United States Army took over the Field Service work. The United States, not being at war at that time with Austria, Bulgaria, or Turkey, the War Department was unwilling to take over the Field Service work in this region. The personnel of the Section was obliged to return to France, but the material was turned over to the French Army of the Orient in order that this much-needed work might continue. It is interesting to note that the cars of the two Balkan sections were still in service during the last great advance which ended the Balkan campaign.



## *Section Three*

### *I. On the Western Front*

En avant! Tant pis pour qui tombe;  
La Mort n'est rien. Vive la tombe  
Quand le pays en sort vivant.  
En avant!

PAUL DÉROULÈDE

#### I

### ALSACE AND THE VOSGES

*December, 1915*

THE trenches in this part of the Vosges — “*Alsace Reconquise*” — are cut along the brows of heights which directly overlook the Rhine Valley. From these summits can be seen, beyond the smoke which deepens the mist above the famous cities of Mulhouse and Colmar, the shadowy boundary of the Black Forest and the snow-topped mountains of Switzerland. A few yards behind the mouths of the communication trenches are the first dressing-stations, everywhere and always one of war’s most ghastly spots. Paths make their way from these dressing-stations down the mountain-sides until they become roads, and, once they become roads, our work begins.

Nowhere else are foreign soldiers upon German soil. Nowhere else, from Ypres to Belfort, do the lines face each other in a mountain range of commanding summits and ever-visible, village-dotted valleys. Nowhere else can

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one study, in history's most famous borderland, both war and one of those problems in nationality which bring about wars. And surely nowhere else are Detroit-manufactured automobiles competing with Missouri-raised mules in the business of carrying wounded men over dizzy heights.

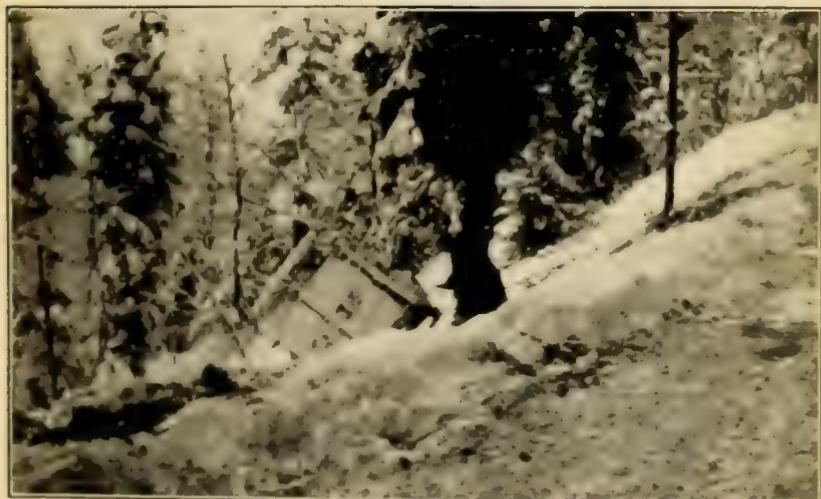
Until our light, cheap cars were risked on these roads, a wounded man faced a ten-mile journey with his stretcher strapped to the back of a mule or put on the floor of a hard, springless wagon. Now he is carried by hand or in wheel-carts from one-half to two miles. Then in one of our cars there is a long climb followed by a long descent. And over such roads! Roads blocked by artillery convoys and swarming with mules staggering, likely as not, beneath a load of high-explosive shells; roads so narrow that two vehicles cannot pass each other when both are in motion; roads with a steep bank on the one side and a sheer drop on the other; roads where lights would draw German shells; roads even where horns must not be blown!

Our base was the village of Saint-Maurice, twenty-five miles to the rear on the French side of the mountains, but strategically located in relation to the various dressing-stations, sorting-points, base hospitals, and railheads which we served, and, in this war of shipping-clerks and petrol, one of those villages which is as much a part of the front as even the trenches themselves. It was a "little, one-eyed, blinking sort of place." It was not as near to the fighting as some of us, particularly adventurous humanitarians fresh from New York and Paris, desired. But, picturesquely placed on the banks of the Moselle and smiling up at the patches of hollow-streaked snow that, even in late July and August, stand out on the tops of the Ballon d'Alsace and the Ballon de Servance, it is a lovely, long-to-be-remembered spot, and every one in the Section quite naturally still speaks of it as "home."

We were billeted in some twenty-five households as if we were officers, although our rations were the rations of common soldiers. Our lodgings ranged from hayloft



WHAT NIGHT TRIPS WITHOUT LIGHTS SOMETIMES MEAN



THE DANGERS OF THE ROAD



## SECTION THREE

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to electrically lighted rooms; but the character of our welcome was always the same — pleasant, cordial, to be counted upon — "You are doing something for France and I will do what I can for you."

### THE BASE AT SAINT-MAURICE

WE parked our cars in the public square, on a hillside, along the fence of the *curé's* yard and against the walls of an old church, where their bright-red crosses flamed out against the gray flaking stone. And, on a cold morning, it was always possible to save a lot of cranking by pushing them down the hill. About half the Section on any given day was to be found at the base and "in bounds," which meant the square, the hotel where we had our mess, or the room where one was billeted. These men composed the reserve list and were liable to be called at any minute, when they must "roll," as we say, instantly. The rest of the Section was on duty in detachments of from one to eight cars and for periods of from twenty-four hours to a week at various dressing-stations, sorting-points, field hospitals, and so forth. The men on reserve were used to reinforce these places, to fill up quickly *trains sanitaires*, and to rush to any one of a half-dozen villages which were sometimes shelled.

Often, when the fighting was heavy, not a man or a car of Section Three was to be found at Saint-Maurice. The repair car even would be driven to some cross-roads or sorting-point where our ambulances brought the wounded from several dressing-stations.

Our *Chef* was Lovering Hill, succeeding Richard Lawrence, who, after a short time, had been compelled to return to the United States. A French lieutenant and an official interpreter were attached to the Section. This French *personnel* was a link between the French Automobile Service and our American organization, and they were busy from morning until night keeping abreast of the required reports, for five-day reports had to be made on the consumption of gasoline, the number of miles

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run, the number of wounded carried, the oil, carbide, and spare parts needed, the rations drawn, and, in great detail, any change in *personnel*.

There were no orderlies or mechanics attached to our Section, and each driver was responsible for the upkeep and repair of his own car. We did as much of this work as possible in the square where we parked our cars. So we patched tires, scraped carbon, and changed springs while the church bell rang persistently and mournfully for masses and funerals and while people came and went about their daily tasks and laughed at our strange language.

Around the railway station is a group of temporary tents, where the wounded are given, by the ladies of the *Croix Rouge*, a cup of coffee or a glass of lemonade before being packed into the *train sanitaire* to begin their long journey to the centre or south of France. The ambulances evacuating the hospitals draw up among these tents under the orders of the sergeant in charge. Four or five French ambulances arrive and are unloaded. Then a smaller car takes its place in the line — a "Flivver."

The driver, after clearly doing his best to make a smooth stop, gets down and helps in lifting out the stretchers. One of the wounded, as his stretcher is slid along the floor of the car and lowered to the ground, groans pitifully. He has groaned this way and sometimes even screamed at the rough places on the road. So the driver's conscience hurts him as he pulls some tacks out of his tires and waits for the sergeant's signal to start. It is his first day's work as an *ambulancier*. He can still see every rock and every rut in the last mile of the road he has just driven over, and he wonders if he really has been as careful as possible. . . .

One wet night the writer was stopped *en route* by a single, middle-aged soldier trudging his way along a steep road running from a cantonment behind the lines to the trenches. Embarrassed a little at first, and pulling at his cap, this man said that he had heard in the trenches of the American ambulances; that a friend had written

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back that he had been carried in one of them; that this was the first time he had had an opportunity of shaking hands with one of the *volontaires américains*. Then, as I leaned over to say good-bye, he shook both my hands, offered me a cigarette, shook both my hands again, saying, as he pointed towards where, in the black distance, sounded the rumble of guns, "Perhaps you will bring *me* back to-morrow."

### THE BEAUTIES OF ALSACE

AWAY from our base, in our nomadic dressing-station-to-hospital existence, we were pretty much "on our own." This part of our life began in a valley reached through the famous pass of Bussang. Starting from the valley of the Moselle, easy grades along a splendid highway crowded with trucks, staff cars, wine-carts, and long lines of yellow hay-wagons, bring one to a tunnel about three hundred yards in length. In the middle of this tunnel is a low white marble stone with a rounded top that until August, 1914, marked the boundary between France and Germany. To an American driving an automobile in the dim tunnel light, this stone is simply something not to be hit. To the French, who have fought so bravely that it may no longer stand for a boundary, it is a sacred symbol. I have seen the eyes of returning wounded glisten at the sight of it. I have heard companies of *chasseurs*, as they passed it going to the trenches, break into singing or whistling their famous Sidi-Brahm march.

Beyond this tunnel the road, wrapping itself around the mountain like a broad, shining ribbon, descends in sweeping curves sometimes a kilometre long into the fertile commercial valley of the Thur, which flows into the Rhine. On one side are high gray rocks where reservist road-menders seem to hang by their teeth and break stones; on the other, a sheer drop into green fields; behind, the tunnel-pierced summit; and in front, the red-roofed houses of several Alsatian villages nestling against yet another line of mountain-tops. And along this road we

have made our way at midnight, at daybreak, in the late afternoon, running cautiously with wounded and running carelessly empty. We were at home, too, in the villages to which it leads; at home with the life-size portrayals of the Crucifixion that are everywhere, even in fields and nailed to trees in the mountains, and at home with the gray stone churches and their curious bulb-shaped towers and clamorous bells.

The appearance of an American ambulance in the villages was no longer a novelty. Sentries let us pass without a challenge, school-children did not any more rush over to us at recess time, or soldiers crowd around us and say to one another, "*Violà une voiture américaine!*" We had friends everywhere — the officer who wanted to speak English and invited us so often to lunch with him; the corporal of engineers who was a well-known professor; the receiving sergeant who was a waiter at the Savoy Hotel in London; the *infirmier* who was in charge of the French department of one of the largest of New York's publishing houses.

### THE "CUISTOT" — A POPULAR MAN

BUT cooks were the people we cultivated the most assiduously. We were forbidden to leave our cars and eat in a café. Besides, the time of day when we were hungriest was the time — maybe midnight or early morning — when no cafés were open or when we were marooned on some mountain-top. For single cars and small wandering detachments there were only informal arrangements for "touching" rations. So we depended upon the good-will of the chief cooks and we seldom went hungry. But the staunchest sustainer of every American ambulance driver presided over the kitchen of the largest sorting-point in the valley. We called this cheery-voiced, big-hearted son of the Savoy Mountains, who before the war washed automobiles in Montmartre, "Le Capitaine," "Joe Cawthorne," or "Gunga Din." He was never tired or out of spirits: he never needed to sleep.

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It will be a rush period. We leave our ambulances only to get gasoline, oil, and water while the wounded are being discharged. "Le Capitaine," too, is up to his neck in work, cooking a meal for a hundred people; hurrying out, at the *Médecin Chef's* order, soup for thirty and tea for twenty more, and still he will find time to run out to our cars with a cup of coffee and a slice of cheese. There is but a single occasion on record when "Joe Cawthorne's" word and smile were not those of cheer, and this was when one of the fellows was on the point of leaving for America. Recalling that his escapes from sleeping at the wheel and running off the bank, thereby endangering his life, were due to "Le Capitaine's" coffee, he offered him an envelope with some money in it. "*Jamais! jamais!*" said the *chef*, returning the envelope, very indignant and hurt as he turned back to his work.

### AT THE MOUNTAIN POSTES

WE were housed at one of the *postes* in a long, low shack built against the side of the crest. Violent storms sometimes took the roof off this shack, with the consequent drenching of the surgeon in charge, ourselves, a half-dozen stretcher-bearers, and as many mule-drivers. Bunks were built crosswise against the side of the walls, and over some of these bunks the words "*Pour intransportables*" were written. The rest, however, were occupied by people on duty there, for it was merely a relay-point, and the wounded, unless unable to stand a further journey or arriving by mules in numbers greater than we could handle, were merely changed from one mode of conveyance to another and given such attention in passing as they might need.

When one of the beds for *intransportables* was occupied, it generally meant that the man died in a few days and was buried close by, a corporal of stretcher-bearers, who was before the war a Roman Catholic missionary in Ceylon, borrowing from one of us a camera to take for the dead man's family a photograph of the isolated grave

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marked with one of those simple wooden crosses from which no mile of northern France is free.

These mountain-tops were often for weeks on end bathed in a heavy mist varied only by rainstorms. At such times, when there was no work to do — and very frequently there were no wounded to carry for twenty-four hours or more — the surgeon, ourselves, the *brancardiers*, and the mule-drivers, would close in around the stove. One of these stretcher-bearers was transferred after being wounded at the battle of the Marne from the front-line troops to the *Service Sanitaire*, and before the war he had served five years in the Foreign Legion in Africa. His stories of this period were endless and interesting, and, after listening to them for a week, we would all go back to our base calling soldiers nothing but *poilus*; coffee, *jus*; wine, *pinard*; canned beef, *singe*; and military irregularities, *Système D*. There was also a good deal of reading done by many of the Section on the rainy days of no work. It was part of the daily relieving-man's unofficial but well-understood duties to bring along any magazines and newspapers that he could get hold of, and generally, too, books gradually accumulated and grew to be considered as a sort of library that must not be taken away. Indeed, at one *poste de secours* our library consisted of two or three French novels and plays, "The New-comes," a two-volume "Life of Ruskin," "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," and "Les Misérables."

When a group of men are on duty at an isolated *poste de secours* like the one I am describing, they take turns in carrying the wounded who may arrive, the man who has made the last trip going to the bottom of the list. And there is something comfortable about feeling that you are the last to "roll" on a stormy night when every plank in the little hut rattles and groans, when the wind shrieks in the desolate outside, when the sinister glare of the trench rockets gleams through the heavy blackness like a flash of lightning, and the wet mule-drivers, who borrow a little of your fire, shake their heads and, pointing to-

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wards the road, say, "*un mauvais chemin.*" And then, as you settle a little deeper in your blankets and blow out your lantern and assure yourself for the last time as to where your matches are and how much gasoline you have in your tank, you are pretty apt to think, before you go to sleep, of the men a little way off in the rain-soaked trenches.

They are certainly not very far away — only over there on the next ridge where the shells are exploding. They have been there, you know, without relief for ten days. You remember when they marched up the mountain to take their turn. How cheerful they seemed! Not one of *them* is sleeping, like you, in blankets. They won't go back to-morrow, like you, to a pleasant dinner, with good friends — outside of the danger zone. Some will come back, and you will carry them in your ambulance. And some will never come back at all. Well . . .

"Did I leave that spark-plug wrench under the car? God knows I can never find it on a night like this and I change a plug every trip."

"Wake up! Don't talk in your sleep!"

"What, is it my turn to roll? Wounded?"

"No; Steve is *en panne* halfway down the mountain."

And you begin to take things in, with one of the Section's *sous-chefs* leaning over your cot explaining that the first man on the list with a load of wounded has had an accident. The others are waked up too. Some are left to take care of such other wounded as may arrive and the rest form a rescue party. Two ride in the rescue ambulance; two more probably walk. The wounded are moved from the broken-down car to the other ambulance, and then daylight finds three or four of us, rain-drenched and mud-smeared, changing a brake-band or digging into a carburetor.

On clear days during summer and early autumn weather, we stayed indoors very little, for the air was champagne-like and the view on all sides magnificent. It is possible, also, from a number of these eminences to

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follow in a fascinating fashion the progress of artillery duels, and, with a good pair of glasses, even to see infantry advancing to the attack. When the cannonading is heavy, the whole horizon pops and rumbles and from the sea of green mountains spread out before you rise puffs of shrapnel smoke, flaky little clouds about the size of a man's hand and pale against the tree-tops, as one thinks of death as pale. They hover, sometimes too many at a time to count, above the mountains and then sink down again into general greenness.

Soldiers march by these *postes* on their way to and from the trenches. Whenever they were allowed to break ranks near our cars, they would crowd around us with little bottles in their hands asking for gasoline to put in *briquets* which they make out of German bullets. Most of these men belonged to battalions of *Chasseurs alpins*, and I do not believe there are any finer soldiers in the world than those stocky, merry-eyed men from the mountain provinces of France, with their picturesque *berets* and their dark-blue coats set off by their horizon-blue trousers. They are called, indeed, the "blue devils," and when the *communiqués* say, "After a heavy shelling of some of the enemy heights in the Vosges, our infantry advanced to the attack and succeeded in taking so many of the enemy trenches," it is probably the *Chasseurs alpins* who have led the way in the face of the hand-grenades and machine-gun fire and the streams of burning oil that, in this country especially, make the "meaning of a mile" so terrible.

PRESTON LOCKWOOD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of St. Louis; Washington University; who was in the Service during most of the years 1915 and 1916. Subsequently was a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Field Artillery. This article was written in December, 1915.

## II

### NOTES FROM A DIARY

*Saint-Maurice-sur-Moselle*

*September 5, 1915*

I WAS invalided down from Dunkirk to Paris on August 20, assigned to our American hospital at Neuilly, and discharged ten days later. I started on September 4 for the Vosges and arrived here at noon to-day. It is wonderful to see the hills and smell wood smoke once more. There is a pleasant set of men here, rather less boisterous than at Dunkirk. Lovering Hill, the leader, is quiet, almost taciturn, but apparently well liked. There are about twenty-six cars in the Section, a third of which are over the ridge in the next valley and the lines are on the second ridge beyond.

*Friday, September 10*

STROLLED up toward the Ballon d'Alsace. In a hundred ways this region reminds me of our own beautiful mountains at home. The contours and colors of the hills; the trees and grass; the rock and soil; especially the little wild flowers and odors of pine, burning wood, and damp earth — these are all familiar. The inhabitants, too, seem to be shaped by their environment to a manner different from that of the other peasants of France.

*Thursday, September 16*

I ROLLED to Trehkopf to-day. The hospital is behind a little knoll, just where the line of woods stops, and the view is wonderful, especially toward evening. Just the other side of the crest are a few shepherds' houses and some "105's" are hidden there which were firing off and on all day. Kingsland was there holding down his ambulance when I arrived and we took *déjeuner* with the cook at 10.30; dined with the cook about 5, after having chopped

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him some wood with a cross-eyed French axe; and then sat and watched the sunset. The first load of men came about 8.30 and I took them down to Krüth. On returning, found another load waiting for me and returned at once.

Sunday, September 19

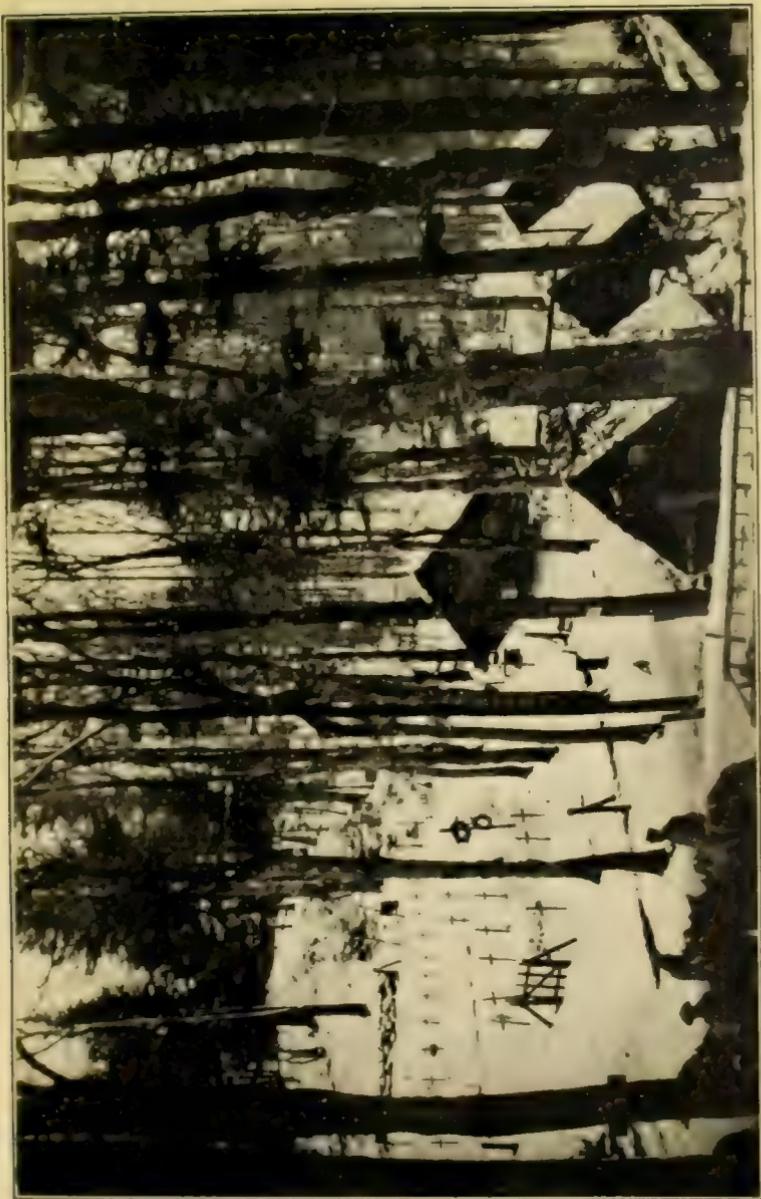
MELLEN came in on his way from Treh just as they were testing some gas-masks. We each tried one on and went into a chamber full of gas. Breathing was rather difficult through the heavy pad over the mouth; but otherwise there was no discomfort. Later they showed us various forms of apparatus — the French bombs, glass spheres full of acetone bromide enclosed in a broken iron shell; flame bombs; sprinklers for hyposulphite against chlorine; oxygen and hypo-respirators for thick clouds; and masks of all sorts.

Waited until almost midnight for some men whom I took to Saint-Amarin. Slept in the large *salle* without blankets.

### A POSTE ON HARTMANNSWEILERKOPF

October 1

IN a checkered automobiling experience, the most anxious drive I ever had occurred last evening. It was at a new *poste* in the mountains, not far from Hartmannsweilerkopf. I was there for the first time when a call came from a station just behind the lines. It was dusk already, but I knew no better than to start. The road is new since the beginning of the war; it follows the steep route up an old path and no lights are allowed on it lest the Germans might locate and shell it. This road is narrow, winding, and very steep, so steep that at places at the top of a descent it looks as if it ended suddenly. There was barely enough twilight through the mass of trees to allow me to see the pack-mules returning from the day's *ravitaillement*; but I finally made my way to the *poste*, where I was given a poor, blind soldier to carry back. What a trip he must have had. If it was trying for me, it was worse



THE "POSTE DE SECOURS" NEAR HARTMANNSWELLERKOPF



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for him. It was now dark — a moonless, starless night in the woods. When I started back, I could seldom see the road itself. I had to steer by the bank or by the gaps in the trees ahead. Occasionally I would feel one of the front wheels leave the crown of the road, and would quickly turn to avoid going over the precipice; but with all this I had to rush the grades which I could not see, but could only feel. At last the machine refused a hill and stalled. I knew that there were steeper hills ahead, worse roads and thicker woods. I decided that a German bullet would be better than a fall down the mountain-side, and so I lit one of my oil lamps. Some passing soldiers gave me a push and by the flickering light of the lantern I felt my way more easily back to the *poste*. I was glad to arrive.

Thursday, October 7

I STARTED down with four *malades assis*. About two kilometres down the road I suddenly noticed that the engine had stopped firing. Meanwhile it had grown dark. My *malades* — especially one — were getting anxious. I sent word to Krüth by an automobile that was passing and then sat down to wait. About nine o'clock Douglass appeared and took my men. I told him what parts I wanted, and we pushed the car to a better place in the road. Then he gave me a piece of bread and left me. I made a chilly meal of the bread and some sardines, lighted my lights and went to bed on a rickety old stretcher, with my three *blessé* blankets and my overcoat. It was more comfortable than I expected.

### MIST AND RAIN ON THE MOUNTAIN

Friday, October 8

A LITTLE passing sun. A shivering, white, misty dawn woke me about five o'clock. I decided, on reflection, that I should be warmer walking around than under my *blessé* blankets, and so I screwed up my courage to rise. Warmed my socks on my lanterns before putting them on. Once up, I felt better. I found in the woods the coals of a fire

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built by the road-menders and then I toasted the remains of the bread and stood in the ashes to warm my feet. About seven I began to hear the rattlings of wagons and the swearing of mule-drivers across the ravine, about a kilometre away by the road. Half an hour later the wagons themselves began to come into view — the long pack-train of the day's *ravitaillement*. A man in a chauffeur's coat greeted me. He had spent the night out also. He was very pleasant — a wholesale dealer in pearls in Paris — and gave me some *pâté* and wine as breakfast. We chatted for about an hour. A little later, some men from the French Section brought up the new parts. One of them was a Ford dealer — also very pleasant, as they all were. They pushed me to a steeper part of the road and left me. Then I coasted down, partly in gear, as far as the artillery barracks at Krüth, walked down to the hospital in order to telegraph, and ate an enormous lunch at "The Joffre." At night slept long and deeply.

Monday, October 11

THERE had been a bomb-attack at Hartmanns during the night and I had a trip almost at once. Returned leisurely to lunch and tried to take a nap before going on another trip. But about 3.30 I was awakened to go to a farm called Hay, way up in the mountains, to get an artillerist who was wounded in the abdomen. The trip took about an hour and a half. The road was narrow and rough and the steepest I have ever seen. The last kilometre but one was so steep and gravelly that the *brancardier* who was with me had to call in a score or so of artillerists to push us over the rougher spots. At last in the dusk I arrived at the communication trench, where the *blessé* was waiting, unconscious and white, on a stretcher, while the doctor was impatient. They put the former in the machine and we started back over that steep, rough road. At every little jar he would groan and cry out. I was going as slowly as possible at the roughest place; but the stones in the road were very large, and the

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*infirmier* went round and spoke to him. He was breathing faintly, but unable to reply. A man at the roadside came and peered inside, too. "Il est mort," he said, whereupon the *infirmier* almost struck the intruder. A little way farther on, still going as gently as possible, we again stopped to look at the patient and found he was dead. We noted the hour and went on, though no faster than before, for we might have been mistaken. It took us longer to return than to climb up. When we reached the hospital and took the body in, it seemed to me once that he moved. But no; my eyes were strained and he was really dead. Then I went over to the *Restaurant zur Poste*, where pretty Fräulein Anna served me the quickest meal I have had in Alsace. Bed about midnight.

### FLIVVER VS. MOTOR TRUCK

*Thursday, October 28*

MOORE appeared in the evening much excited. He had knocked a *camion* from Hill 408 into the river at Urbès! He had followed it some way, trying to pass, but it would not move over. At that, he attempted to squeeze past. The hub of his front wheel wedged in under the hub of the truck's wheel, and upset its steering so that its momentum carried it off the road. Moore felt no shock, and except for a dent in the hub-cap, old 58 is undamaged. But the *camion*, with three cannon-barrels on board, is in the river!

*Monday, November 1*

THERE is a new *médecin auxiliaire* here — a tall, quiet medical student. He had just returned from being a prisoner in Germany, having been captured thirteen months ago. The German military authorities found a revolver on him and were about to shoot him on this account, when an officer intervened, saying that their doctors also carried revolvers. They should have returned him at once; but, instead, they kept him and almost starved him. He lived mostly on food sent him from home. He

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was owed a salary, but it was not given him until he left, as his captors were afraid he would buy food with it.

*Tuesday, November 2*

ONE of the *évacués* from the hospital at La Source was the German I took there during the attack. The *brancardiers* were not very careful of him then. They jerked him out and slammed him down muttering, "salaud," and "cochon." But during the two weeks he was there, they had come to know him better, and he, instead of being afraid he was to be shot, as he had been at first, was now laughing and joking in broken French with his *infirmiers*. As he left, they all shook him by the hand and one called after him "*Bonne chance, camarade!*"

### LATE AUTUMN IN THE VOSGES

*Wednesday, November 10*

IT both rained and snowed! A white day — misty and snowy. The sleetly snow in the mountains was heavy rain in the valley.

The Section moved to-day from Saint-Maurice to Mollau near Wesserling, a tiny little village smaller than Saint-Maurice and built along a brook on the side of the mountains. I had not known that there was a town there, it is so shut in by hills. A very pretty spot; the slopes partly smooth and grassy, partly rocky, partly woods. We all sleep together — except the officers and Curley — in the schoolroom on stretchers placed on top of plank beds. There is a splendid tall porcelain stove in the room; but the only wood that is provided for us is to be found in a tract of forest on the Ballon d'Alsace, which we cannot possibly get at. However, we procured some. In the middle of the room is a table and a good enough light in the ceiling. The two disadvantages are that the place is noisy until eleven o'clock at night so that it is difficult to write or sleep, and that we have not even hooks to hang our things on. We eat army rations, cooked at the hotel. For the moment the cooking is superb; but

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we are soon to get an army cook, who will probably change all that. The *chef's* landlady is from Atlanta, Georgia, and her children speak some English. We get cream instead of hot milk for our coffee in the morning, and we are soon to have butter. The inhabitants here are less German than most of the Alsatians and speak French as well as *patois*.

Tuesday, November 16

FAIR and cold. A call to Krüth — fifty frozen feet from Adsinfirst — came in the middle of the morning. Did various odd jobs in the afternoon, brushed out car, made a hood of green burlap, chopped wood, and wrote a little; went out walking with Fenton and otherwise amused myself. In the evening a contagious call came in. I took it and in the moonlight, carried the man from Krüth to Le Thillot.

Wednesday, November 17

A DARK morning. There was a Bussang evacuation. Hill sent me over. Col de Bussang very slippery. Wagons and *camions en panne* all the way along. Evacuated for about an hour. Fenton tried to avoid a woman, skidded, and smashed a rear wheel. Returning found even more *camions en panne* on the Col. Our cars were skidding badly also. Luckily I had a pair of chains and got along fairly well. There was a convoy of four *fourgons*, however, which was having a hard time of it. One had gone over the edge, spilling its load of shells all over the road. Another had gone into the ditch. Still another was stuck crosswise on a steep part of the highway so that I could not pass. In one place, I was kept waiting an hour before the vehicles moved up. Next we met a convey of wagons climbing the hill, or rather failing to climb it, and again had to stop. Farther on a team of six horses ran away on an icy slope and rushed into my car, but, luckily did no damage to anybody. So, altogether, it was night when I reached Herrenfluh; and I had to return by moonlight — not at all difficult and most beautiful. On returning

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to Tomansplatz, I had to take another trip — a man there had had a grenade explode in his hand. A cold night.

Saturday, November 20

YESTERDAY, on the eve of the Harvard-Yale football game, we sent the following cable to Percy Haughton, coach of the Harvard football team:

À la veille de votre combat, salut! Serrez vos ceintures, fixez vos baionnettes, chargez vos fusils, grenades à main, et en avant les gars! On vous regards même des sommets des Vosges.

*Le Harvard Club d'Alsace Reconquise*

Monday, November 22

THE Harvard-Yale score was announced, 41-0. The Harvard Club of *Alsace Reconquise* celebrated suitably, for Doyle, our only Yale man, was away.

Thursday, November 25

LIGHT snow. Carey and Waldo Peirce are making a pack of caricature playing-cards. I sat for the queen of hearts. Our Thanksgiving dinner was a great event. Our new French officer was our guest. We had a delicious turkey, two geese, cranberries, chestnuts, apple pie, plum pudding — a wonderful gorge. Late to bed.

Saturday, November 27

FAIR. Very cold. This morning it took me three quarters of an hour to start the car. Had to lay a red-hot poker on the carburetor.

Sunday, November 28

COLD. Every one had frightful struggles getting off. Hot water on the carburetors would freeze before the motor would catch. Was orderly. After clearing up the barracks, I took a call to Thillot with Fenton. We stopped at Saint-Maurice to pay our respects to all the pretty girls. Bought a goose. Arrived at Mollau about dark.

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Monday, December 6

THE Captain of the English Section which is to replace us rolled up from Rupt yesterday in an enormous car. Rice took him up to Tomans. He was much disgusted with the road and thinks it will be impossible to continue the service there. He was also horrified, and not without reason, at our quarters.

Friday, December 10

THE road, wherever it is not a morass, is ridged and gullied by the rains and the fields near Urbès are flooded. Both the Moselle and the Thur are out of their banks. Hall declares he saw some "504" shells; probably wine-barrels!

Tuesday, December 15

AN English "chauffeur" (to be distinguished from "volunteer") brought over his Ford for Fenton to repair today, and spent the night. Matter committed a social solecism at Krüth by inviting both volunteer and chauffeur to lunch together with him.

Friday, December 17

THE boys have sometimes complained, not without reason, of the hardships and fatigues of the work. But now that there is no work, they complain still more, and I not least of them. They are peevish; I also. They will not go to bed at night or get up in the morning. They are restless, and yet the smallest tasks are done unwillingly. I am tempted to write as a general proposition that men are happiest when working hardest. But it must not be forgotten that I am writing in a time of idleness.

### THE ATTACK ON HARTMANNSWEILERKOPF

Tuesday, December 21

THE attack is on! Terrific bombardment. An atmosphere of ill-suppressed excitement. No work in the morning or early afternoon, as the attack did not begin until noon. Walked up to the *boyau* leading to the trenches on the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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Sudelkop and cautiously peered over the ridge at Hartmanns. A terrible sight. There was a band of trees, stripped bare by shell-fire, from the valley to the crest. A company of soldiers passed up, going to the trenches. At the entrance to the *boyau*, they stopped to load and then went on, stopping behind the parapet. It did not seem possible that any of them could go down to that shell-clotted hillside and return alive. I wonder if any of them did?

We crawled down the ridge again, mostly on our bellies, through the light, wet snow, and so back to the *poste*, where we at last found a cabin which at least kept the wind off, and I went to sleep, waking up hungry and cold. In the meanwhile, the others had found a travelling kitchen and we got something to eat. Just before dusk, the prisoners and wounded began to come in. The road from Tomans down is icy and slippery; Mellen was unable to descend with only one chain, wagons everywhere in trouble. I reached Moosch in safety, however. Luckily there is a moon. Mounting to Tomans again, took two trips down, and stayed for an hour's sleep. Gailliard, the cook, is established, with food and the means of cooking it, in a little house opposite the hospital. There is also room for about six to sleep comfortably, and there I slept with the others.

Wednesday, December 22

*Blessés* coming in rather slowly, but still fast enough to keep us busy. Last night Hill and the *Divisionnaire* were down near Bains-Douches when they came across a body of Germans, unarmed but unguarded. So they had to act guard; marshalled them and marched them to the fort, Hill giving the commands in German. On one of my trips to Moosch, was able to pick up a *peau de mouton* and some Boche boots. The latter were much needed, for both my pairs are soaked through. The hospital is getting more and more crowded. The corridors are so full of stretchers that it is almost impossible to move along them.

## SECTION THREE

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There is room in the *salle de triage* for six stretcher cases, and there is a rule against removing any of them into the wards until all have been entered on the books. So to-day six cars waited two hours to be unloaded, the poor wretches inside crying to be taken out. Slept three hours at Tomans.

*Thursday, December 23*

BOMBARDMENTS by the Germans. After a slight lull in the morning, work began again. Rolled pretty steadily. But the shortage of men in the Section is serious. Three are laid up with illnesses, and the strain is telling a little on all of us. Only Curley is a man of iron. But he is so uncomfortable at Moosch that he rolls up to Tomans, and is so disgusted with Tomans that he at once rolls down again to Moosch. The cars, too, are giving way. The Bitschweiler road is wearing out brake-bands faster than they can be put on. Several axle-shafts have broken, among others that on the supply car which is now reposing among the corpses in the garage at Tomans.

*Friday, December 24*

HEAVY showers. Mist. Fitful bombardment, evidently much hampered by the fog. Made one trip in the morning and one in the early afternoon. Returning from the latter was impressed into service by Dick Hall,<sup>1</sup> who rolled back to Moosch while I rolled up the mountain. Poor Dick! Poor charming, whimsical Dick! I never saw him again. Had a trip down in time for supper at Moosch. On my way up, found Cate in trouble with a tire — his sixth since the beginning of the attack — and stopped to help him. When we were finished, we went on, but found Douglass, Peirce, and Jennings all waiting at the watering-trough for some trucks to reach the top of the hill, as it was impossible to pass by them. Finally we started off

<sup>1</sup> Richard Nelville Hall, of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Dartmouth, '15; joined Section Three of the Field Service in May of 1915; killed by a shell on Christmas Eve, 1915.

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again, a munitions convoy stopping to heave Peirce's old 'bus up every little grade. A cart stuck in the middle of the steep corner complicated matters. But we finally reached Tomans.

*Thursday, December 30*

THE French attack has been more or less a failure. General Serret was wounded the night before last. About one in the morning Curley went down to Bains-Douches to get him. It was a very dark night, and he was, of course, unable to use any lights. The "Willer" road was kept clear of traffic and the general was rushed down to Moosch.

They have found it necessary to amputate the General's leg.<sup>1</sup>

TRACY J. PUTNAM

<sup>1</sup> General Serret died on January 6, 1916.



### III

#### CHRISTMAS EVE, 1915

IN one of the most beautiful countries in the world, the Alsatian Valley of the Thur runs to where the Vosges abruptly end in the great flat plain of the Rhine. In turn a small valley descends into that of the Thur. At the head of this valley lies the small village of Mollau where was billeted the Section. At the end of 1915 it had been through months of laborious, patient, never-ceasing trips from the valley to the mountain-tops and back, up the broadened mule-paths, rutted and worn by a thousand wheels and the hoofs of mules, horses, and oxen, by hob-nailed boots and by the American ambulance cars (for no other Section is equipped with cars and men for such service), up from the small Alsatian towns, leaving the main valley road to grind through a few fields of ever-increasing grade on into the forest, sometimes pushed, sometimes pulled, always blocked on the steepest slopes by huge army wagons deserted where they stuck, rasping cartloads of trench torpedoes on one side, crumbling the edge of the ravine on the other — day and night — night and day — in snow and rain — and, far worse, fog — months of foul and days of fair — up with the interminable caravans of *ravitaillement* supplies with which to sustain or blast the human body (we go down with the human body once blasted), up past small armies of Alsatian peasants of three generations (rather two — octogenarians and children) forever repairing, forever fighting the wear and tear of all that passes, — up at last to the little log huts and rudely made *postes de secours* at the mouth of the trench "bowels" — a silent little world of tethered mules, shrouded carts, and hooded figures; lightless by night, under the great pines where is a crude garage usually filled with grenades into which one may back at one's own discretion.

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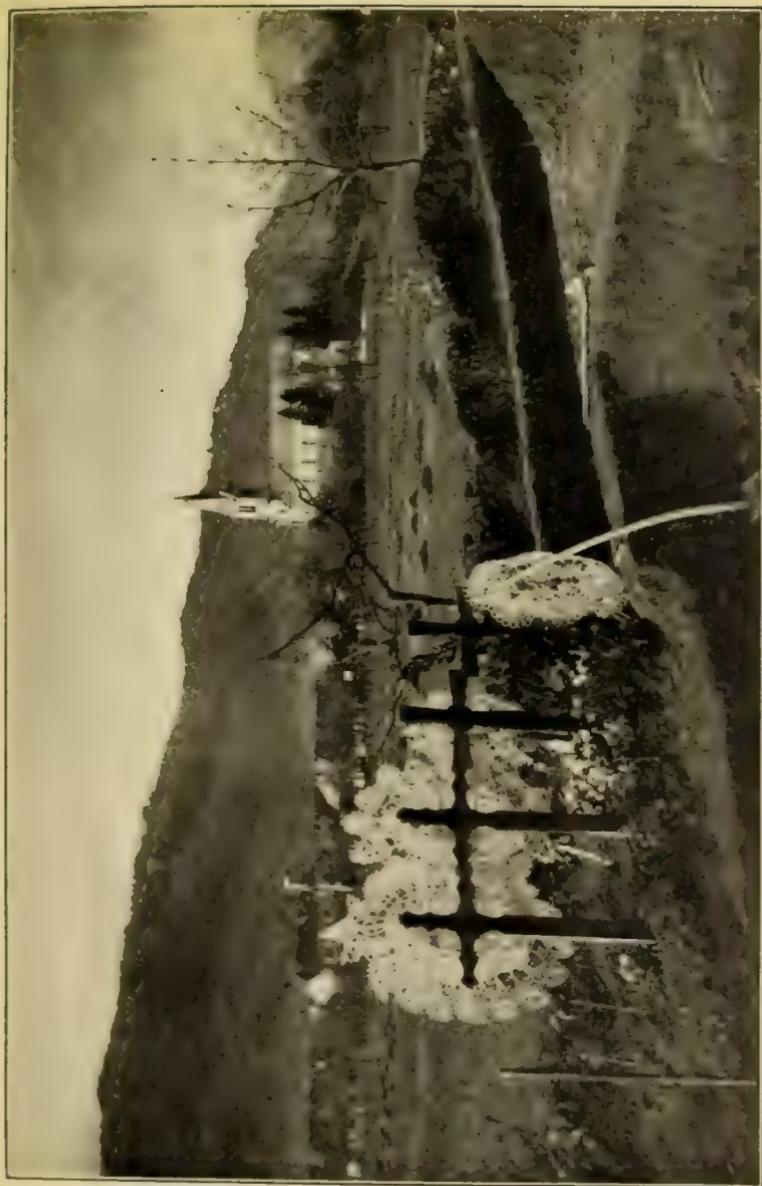
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Day after day, night after night, wounded or no wounded, the little ambulances ply with their solitary drivers. Few men in ordinary autos or in ordinary senses travel such roads by choice, but all that is impossible is explained by a simple "*C'est la guerre.*" Why else blindly force and scrape one's way past a creaking truck of shells testing twenty horses, two abreast, steaming in their own cloud of sweaty vapor, thick as a Fundy fog? Taking perforce the outside, the ravine side, the ambulance passes. More horses and wagons ahead in the dark, another blinding moment or two, harnesses clash and rattle, side bolts and lanterns are wiped from the car. It passes again. *C'est la guerre.* Why else descend endless slopes with every brake afire, with three or four human bodies, as they should not be, for cargo, where a broken drive-shaft leaves but one instantaneous twist of the wheel for salvation, a thrust straight into the bank, smashing the car, but saving its precious load? *C'est la guerre.*

The men in time grow tired as do the machines. A week before Christmas they rested quietly in their villages — a week of sun and splendid moon, spent tuning up their motors and gears and jogging about afoot after all their "rolling." A lull in the fighting, and, after three weeks of solid rain, nature smiles. The Section had been ordered to leave shortly, and it was only held for a long-expected attack which would bring them all together for once on the mountain in a last great effort with the *Chasseurs alpins* and the mountains they both loved.

On December 21 the mountains spoke, and all the cars rolled upwards to the *poste* of Hartmannsweilerkopf — taken and retaken a score of times — a bare, brown, blunt, shell-ploughed top where before the forest stood — up elbowing, buffeting, and tacking their way through battalions of men and beasts, up by one pass and down by another unmountable (for there was no going back against the tide of what was battle-bound). From one mountain-slope to another roared all the lungs of war.

RICHARD HALL'S GRAVE





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For five days and five nights — scraps of days, the shortest of the year, nights interminable — the air was shredded with shrieking shells — intermittent lulls for slaughter in attack after the bombardment, then again the roar of the counter-attack.

All this time, as in all the past months, Richard Nelville Hall drove his car up the winding, shell-swept artery of the mountain at war — past crazed mules, broken-down artillery carts, swearing drivers, stricken horses, wounded stragglers still able to hobble — past long convoys of Boche prisoners, silent, descending in twos, guarded by a handful of men — past all the *personnel* of war, great and small (for there is but one road, one road on which to travel, one road for the enemy to shell), past *abris*, bomb-proofs, subterranean huts, to arrive at the *poste de secours*, where silent men moved mysteriously in the mist under the great trees, where the cars were loaded with an ever-ready supply of still more quiet figures (though some made sounds), mere bundles in blankets. Hall saw to it that those quiet bundles were carefully and rapidly installed — right side up, for instance — for it is dark and the *brancardiers* are dulled, deadened by the dead they carry; then rolled down into the valley below, where little towns bear stolidly their daily burden of shells wantonly thrown from somewhere in Bocheland over the mountain to anywhere in France — the bleeding bodies in the car a mere corpuscle in the full crimson stream, the ever-rolling tide from the trenches to the hospitals of the blood of life and the blood of death. Once there, his wounded unloaded, Dick Hall filled his gasoline tank and rolled again on his way. Two of his comrades had been wounded the day before, but Dick Hall never faltered. He slept where and when he could, in his car, at the *poste*, on the floor of our temporary kitchen at Moosch — dry blankets — wet blankets — blankets of mud — blankets of blood; contagion was pedantry — microbes a myth.

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At midnight Christmas Eve, 1915, he left the valley to get his load of wounded for the last time. Alone, ahead of him two hours of lonely driving up the mountain. Perhaps he was thinking of other Christmas Eves, perhaps of his distant home, and of those who were thinking of him. . . . The next American to pass, found him by the roadside halfway up the mountain. His face was calm and his hands still in position to grasp the wheel. A shell had struck his car and killed him instantly, painlessly. A chance shell in a thousand had struck him at his post, in the morning of his youth.

Up on the mountain fog was hanging over Hartmanns Christmas morning, as if Heaven wished certain things obscured. The trees were sodden with dripping rain. Weather, sight, sound, and smell did their all to sicken mankind, when news was brought to us that Dick Hall had fallen on the Field of Honor. No man said, "Merry Christmas," that day. No man could have mouthed it. With the fog forever closing in, with the mountain shaken by a double bombardment as never before, we sat all day in the little log hut by the stove, thinking first of Dick Hall, then of Louis Hall, his brother, down in the valley.

Dick Hall, we who knew you, worked with you, played with you, ate with you, slept with you, we who took pleasure in your company, in your modesty, in your gentle manners, in your devotion and in your youth — we still pass that spot, and we salute. Our breath comes quicker, our eyes grow dimmer, we grip the wheel a little tighter — we pass — better and stronger men.

WALDO PEIRCE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The artist; of Bangor, Maine; Harvard '07. In France when the war broke out; joined Section Three, in which he served until this Section was transferred to the Balkans. A number of the paintings and sketches reproduced in these volumes are the work of Mr. Peirce.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Richard Hall was buried with honors of war in the valley of Saint-Amarin, in Alsace, which once more belongs to France. His grave, in a crowded military cemetery, is next that of a French officer who fell the same morning. It bears the brief inscription, "Richard Hall, an American who died for France." Simple mountain people, in the then only part of Germany where foreign soldiers were, brought to the grave many wreaths of native flowers and Christmas greens. The funeral service was held in a little Protestant chapel, five miles down the valley. At the conclusion of the service, Hall's citation was read and the Cross of War pinned on the coffin. On the way to the cemetery sixteen soldiers, belonging to a battalion on leave from the trenches, marched in file on each side with arms reversed. The *Médecin Chef* spoke as follows at the grave:

*Messieurs — Camarades —*

*C'est un suprême hommage de reconnaissance et d'affection que nous rendons, devant cette fosse fraîchement creusée, à ce jeune homme — je dirais volontiers — cet enfant — tombé hier pour la France sur les pentes de l'Hartmannsweilerkopf. . . . Aï-je besoin de vous rappeler la douloureuse émotion que nous avons tous ressentis en apprenant hier matin que le conducteur Richard Hall, de la Section Sanitaire Américaine N° 3, venait d'être mortellement frappé par un éclat d'obus, près du poste de secours de Thomannsplatz où il montait chercher des blessés?*

*A l'Ambulance 3/58, où nous éprouvions pour nos camarades américains une sincère amitié basée sur des mois de vie commune pendant laquelle il nous fut permis d'apprécier leur endurance, leur courage, et leur dévouement, le conducteur Richard Hall était estimé entre tous pour sa modestie, sa douceur, sa complaisance.*

*À peine sorti de l'université de Dartmouth, dans la générosité de son cœur d'adolescent, il apporta à la France le précieux concours de sa charité en venant relever, sur les champs de bataille d'Alsace, ceux de nos vaillants soldats blessés en combattant pour la patrie bien-aimée.*

*Il est mort en "Chevalier de la Bienfaisance" — en "Américain" — pour l'accomplissement d'une œuvre de bonté et de charité chrétienne.*

*Aux êtres chers qu'il a laissés dans sa patrie, au Michigan, à ses parents désolés, à son frère ainé, qui, au milieu de nous, montre une si stoïque douleur, nos hommages et l'expression de notre tristesse sont bien sincères et bien vifs!*

*Conducteur Richard Hall, vous allez reposer ici à l'ombre du drapeau tricolore, auprès de tous ces vaillants dont vous êtes*

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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*l'émule. . . . Vous faites à juste titre partie de leur bataillon sacré! . . . Seul, votre corps, glorieusement mutilé, disparaît — votre âme est remonté trouver Dieu — votre souvenir, lui, reste dans nos cœurs, impérissable! . . . Les Français n'oublient pas!*

*Conducteur Richard Hall — ADIEU!*



## IV

### FROM TWO DIARIES

*Mittlach, December 1, 1915*

THE other night, just as I was going to crawl in, three *blessés* arrived from the trenches, and another was down the road in a farmhouse waiting for the *Médecin Chef*; he was too badly wounded to go farther. They asked me to take the men to the hospital at Krüth, which is back over the mountains twenty miles. I dressed again — I hated to because it was warm in the little log shack and it had begun to rain outside. I lit my lantern, and went out to the shelter where the cars were, got my tank filled with gas, and my lights ready to burn when I could use them. It was so black one could see nothing. We put two of the *blessés* on stretchers and pushed them slowly into the back of the car; the other sat in front with me. This we did under the protection of the hill where the *poste de secours* is located. When one goes fifty yards on the road beyond the station, there is a valley, narrow but clear, which is in full view of the trenches, and going and coming, it is necessary to pass over this road. In the daytime one cannot be seen, because the French have put up a row of evergreens along it which hides the road. I started and proceeded very carefully, keeping my lantern under a blanket, and we soon arrived at the house where the other *blessé* was waiting for the doctor. It was a little old Alsatian farmhouse. I pushed in the door and stepped down into the flagstone kitchen. On the floor lay the *chasseur* on a stretcher, his face pale under the lamplight from the table. The *Médecin Chef* was bending over him injecting tetanus anti-toxin into his side, and with each punch of the needle the poor fellow, already suffering from terrible wounds, would squirm, but not utter a word. The soldiers stood around the tiny room, their

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heads almost touching the brown rafters above. We took the man out to my car on the stretcher, carrying the light under the coat of one of the stretcher-bearers; for if the Germans see a light moving anywhere in French territory, they will fire on it if they think it near enough.

I started up the mountain with my load of wounded. On either side of the road the French guns at certain places pounded out their greetings to the Boches; the concussion shook the road so that I could feel it in my car. I could light my lights after about a mile; so I proceeded slowly up the mountain in low speed while the heat from my motor kept the *blessés* and myself warm. About half-way up, we ran into the clouds, and it became so foggy one could scarcely see; farther up it became colder and began to snow. I had no chains on my car, and it worried me to be without them, especially with three helpless men inside and one out. However, I kept climbing up, and the higher I went the more it snowed and the harder it blew. Near the top it became veritably blinding — snow, sleet, and wind — a typical northeasterly American blizzard. The little car ploughed on bravely; it stuck only once on a sharp turn, and after backing I was able to get on by rushing it. But I could not see the road, the sleet was blowing so into my face and the snow was so thick. At last, however, I reached the summit where the wind was strong enough at one time actually to lift my car a little. On one side of the road was a high embankment and on the other a ravine sloping down at least a thousand feet. I was scared to death, for without chains we were liable to skid and plunge down this depth. The snow had been falling all day, and in places had drifted over a yard deep. Twice I took a level stretch to be the road, but discovered my mistake in time to back up. The third time was more serious — I plunged ahead through a drift which I thought was the road, and finally I stuck and could move neither way. I could not leave these men there all night wounded, and the blizzard did not stop, so the only thing to do was to find help. I walked back



LA NEIGE



WINTER DAYS IN ALSACE



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to what I thought was the road and kept on towards a slight, glimmering light I could see at a distance. It turned out to be an enclosure for the mules which haul ammunition over the mountains; and I felt better again, for I knew there were a lot of territorial soldiers with them. I pulled them out of bed; it was then 10.30. They came with me and pushed me back on the road, also pushed me along — ten of them — until they got me on the descent, and from there on the weight of my car carried me down through the drifts. I arrived at the hospital at 12.30, the happiest man one ever saw to get those poor fellows there safely.

*December 2*

I WAS sent back to Mittlach the next day to get four more wounded. They were *assis*, not *couchés*, fortunately, for the snow on top of Trehkopf had been falling and drifting all day and night and rolling was not easy. When I got to the top of the mountain and started down, I found the roads had been broken and beaten down by munition wagons and were like a sheet of ice. I started down without chains, when the car, though all my brakes were on, began to slide slowly down the road. It even slid toward the edge of the ravine until the two front wheels went over; but there, fortunately, it stopped, and I got it back on the road again. I then turned the radiator into the bank on the other side and tried tying rags on the rear wheels to keep the car from sliding. Then a big wagon with four horses came behind me down the hill, which was so slippery at this spot that the horses began to slide down on their haunches, and the driver, even with brakes on, could not stop them. The horses came on faster, and faster, slid into the rear of my car, pushed it along for about six feet, and then nothing could stop it. It, too, started down the road going faster and faster. I yelled to the wounded to jump. They understood my poor French and piled out just in time, for the car ran across the road and plunged down into the ravine. There was a

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lot of snow on the side of the ravine, which had piled up in such a way that the car was stopped part-way down so that it was not injured very much, though it took nine men and as many mules to pull it out.

LUKE C. DOYLE<sup>1</sup>

December 31, 1915

SOME little time ago we received our first taste of winter, and my first experience made me put more faith in the rumors of larger falls of snow here than an American likes to concede to any country but his own.

The car I was to relieve got a trip late one night in what was, even at Mittlach, a terrific rainstorm. The next morning it continued raining, but I could see the peaks of the mountains covered with snow. Late in the afternoon, just after dark, the familiar sound of a Ford brought me out of the *poste de secours*, and I found Rice, with his car covered with snow which even the rain had n't yet melted. His story was of helping the car I had relieved, and of having worked all morning, in their efforts to pull it back on the road from which a heavy ammunition wagon had pushed it, neither vehicle being able to stick to the icy road. Farther on, he had met continual snow-drifts. His eagerness to bring me chains, my only chance of getting up, persuaded him to keep on, and he eventually got through with everybody's help on the road. We decided to wait until the storm was over — our only alternative — and proceeded to make ourselves as comfortable as we could, which means a stove, somewhere to sleep, and plenty of books to read and tobacco to smoke. It was four days before the snow let up and we had visions of a long and lonely winter; but as soon as the storm broke we started up, and, as it proved, in the nick of time, as the five kilometres along the crest were again swept by snow and sleet and drifts were beginning to form. The Mittlach service had to be abandoned after this, although

<sup>1</sup> Of Worcester, Massachusetts; Yale, '09; in the Service during part of 1915 and 1916; Captain and later Major in U.S.A. Sanitary Corps.

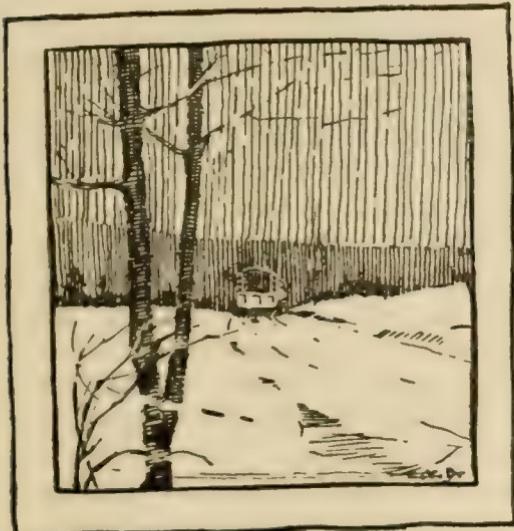
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in late November and early December a car could go through, but it was impossible to assure the service and it was found better to have sleighs and wagons do the work.

STEPHEN GALATTI<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '10; joined Section Three in 1915 in Alsace; later adjoint at Headquarters to Mr. Andrew, and second in command of Service; first a Captain, then a Major in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service, when the United States took over and continued the Service.



## V IN LORRAINE

*March, 1916*

WE left Alsace one morning early in February, 1916, when the valleys were filled with tinted mist and the snowy hill slopes were glowing pink with sunrise, and we hated to leave. We still look back upon it as the Promised Land. We formed a convoy of twenty-three cars, in which 170 was placed immediately behind the leader, an arrangement to which twenty-one persons objected. Every time the side-boxes came open and the extra tins of gasoline scattered over the landscape, or when the engine stopped through lack of sympathy with the engineer, three or four cars would manage to slip by. It was a sort of progressive-euchre party in which 170 never held a winning hand.

No one concerned had the least idea whither we were headed. The first night we spent at Rupt, where there is an automobile park. We took it on hearsay that there was an automobile park, for we left the next morning without having seen it; but when two days later we joined the Twentieth Army Corps — “the Fighting Twentieth” — at Moyen, we were reported as coming straight from the automobile park at Rupt. Consequently we were assumed to be ready for indefinite service “to the last button of the last uniform,” but when we had explained that mechanically speaking our last uniform was on its last button the Fighting Twentieth shook us off.

We spent a week at Moyen however — in it up to our knees. The surrounding country was dry and almost dusty; but Moyen has an atmosphere of its own and local color — and the streets are not clean. Yet to most of us the stay was intensely interesting. At that time it lay just back of the high-water mark of German invasion, and the little villages and towns roundabout looked like

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the broken wreckage tossed up by the tide — long streets of roofless, blackened ruins, and in the midst the empty skeleton of a church, whose tower had been pierced by shells, and with the broken chimes blocking the entrance. Nothing had been done to alter or disguise the marks of invasion. The fields surrounding Moyen were pitted with shell-craters, which had a suggestive way of lining the open roads, along whose edges were rifle-pits and shallow trenches filled with a litter of cartridge-boxes and bits of trampled uniform and accoutrements, blue and red, or greenish-gray, mixed together; and always and everywhere the long grave-mounds with the little wooden crosses which are a sadly familiar feature of every landscape on the Western Front. The Moyen region lacked, perhaps, the bald, grim cruelty of Hartmannsweilerkopf, but it is a place not to be forgotten.

From Moyen we moved on to Tantonville, a place not lacking in material comforts, but totally devoid of soul; and from there we made our round of *postes* — of one, two, or four cars, and for two, four, or eight days. At some *postes*, the work was fairly constant, carrying the sick and second-hand wounded from *poste* to hospital and from hospital to railroad; in others, one struggled against mental and physical decay.

At Oeleville, we saw the class of 1916 called out — brave, cheerful-looking boys, standing very straight at attention as their officers passed down the line, and later, as we passed them on the march, cheering loudly for "les américains" — and so marching on to the open lid of hell at Verdun. The roads were filled with soldiers, and every day and all day the troop-trains were rumbling by to the north; and day after day and week after week the northern horizon echoed with the steady thunder of artillery. Sometimes, lying awake in the stillness of dawn to listen, one could not count the separate explosions, so closely did they follow each other. The old man who used to open the railway gate for me at Dombasle would shake his head and say that we ought to be up at Verdun, and

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once a soldier beside him told him that we were neutrals and not supposed to be sent under fire. I heard that suggestion several times made, and one of our men used to carry in his pocket a photograph of poor Hall's car to refute it.

### A CALL FOR BACCARAT

THERE was a momentary thrill of interest when a call came for four cars to Baccarat — a new *poste* and almost on the front, where was an English section in need of assistance; and we four who went intended to "show them how." But it seemed that the call had come too late and the pressing need was over — the last batch of German prisoners had been brought in the day before and the active fighting had ceased. We stepped into the long wooden cabin where they waited — the German wounded -- and they struggled up to salute — a more pitiful, undersized, weak-chested, and woe-begone set of human derelicts I hope never to see again in uniform; and as we stood among them in our strong, warm clothes, for it was snowing outside, all of us over six feet tall, I felt suddenly uncomfortable and ashamed.

Once we were startled at lunch-time, while we were eating the rarity of blood sausage, by an explosion near the edge of town, when three of us stepped to the door, but the fourth man kept his seat to help himself from the next man's plate, a striking example of coolness under fire. As we looked out there came a second explosion a little farther off, and then in a few moments a telephone call for an ambulance, with the news that a Taube had struck a train. When I reached the place, the train had gone on, carrying ten slightly wounded to Lunéville, while I brought back the other two on stretchers — one a civilian struck in a dozen places, but otherwise apparently in excellent health and spirits; the other, a soldier in pretty bad shape. It must have been excellent marksmanship for the Taube, since we had seen nothing in the clear blue sky overhead nor heard the characteristic

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whirr of the motor, and yet both shell-craters were very close to the tracks.

In Alsace these Taubes were constantly in sight, but seldom attacked and almost never scored a hit, while the French gunners seemed perfectly happy to fire shrapnel at them all the afternoon with the same indecisive result. One could not even take the white shrapnel clouds as a point of departure in looking for the aeroplane, though the French artillery is very justly famous for its accuracy of fire. In this instance, as in all air raids, the success scored seemed pitifully futile, for it was not a military train, and most of the wounded were non-combatants, while it added its little unnecessary mite of suffering, and of hatred to the vast monument which Germany has reared to herself and by which she will always be remembered.

WALTER KERR RAINSFORD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Ridgefield, Connecticut; Harvard, '04; in the Field Service during the greater part of 1916; subsequently Captain in Infantry, U.S.A.



## VI

### "ON TO VERDUN"

*July, 1916*

OUR journey from the Lorraine front carried us to a small village where was quartered the *État-Major* and which was situated directly on the main Verdun road. There was no mistaking our destination now. The first impressions in that village will always be clear and distinct. Here was the first evidence of the immensity and awfulness of a modern battle — the Verdun road. The village itself was nothing; simply a spot through which passed the Verdun road. This was a broad street, and it well needed to be. It was rough, too, for the constant churning of the thousands of wheels that passed upon it destroyed any surface as fast as it could be made. Where were all these trucks with their loads of men and material going? To Verdun!

There they come now. First appears a squad of twenty, thirty, or fifty French trucks, loaded down with men; close upon them is another squad, larger even, of American Whites, said to have been captured by the British fleet on their way to Germany; then another squad of an Italian make; then a French make; then the Americans again; and so the never-ending line moves on. An ambulance slips by; the men are beginning to return already. Were we to be doing that soon? Now a staff car rushes on and another passes returning. A truck comes by bearing the compressed hydrogen for the many artillery observation balloons. And so this terrible traffic of the awful business of war pressed back and forth — an almost unending stream. Such was the first impression of the Verdun road.

Our stay in the village was short. Two or three days passed and we were again on the move, stopping this time at a little town called Soubrienne, well off from the main Verdun road. Here we waited five or six days to be sent

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up finally to near Nixéville, whence we did the work of removing the *blessés* back from the fight around Verdun. Our cars were parked on the slope of a small hill rising to the north of the village. A short walk brought one to the top of it, where could be distinctly heard the tremendous battle tune of the cannon, and at night the bright flashes of the larger guns would appear.

Across the hollow in which was built the town and on a level plateau was situated the aerial station, whence flew the battle planes to do the service about Verdun. This was real flying and made what we saw near Nancy seem nothing. All the machines here were of the fastest type and the pilots were in a class with Navarre. It was a wonderful sight to see three or four Nieuports swooping about in the air, looping the loop, or doing the leaf-drop or the war-hawk swoop. Like swallows they seemed, not only in numbers, but in dexterity. On one side we had these birds of war and their nest — the aerodrome — rising from just beyond the top of the hill; below us was the village full of soldiers; and beyond it the fields filled with wagons and horses, and to the right the same.

In front of us, up the hill, and to our right, lay Verdun and the immense area of fighting that was involved in the defence of it. Here was that steady sound of guns which, like the pounding of the sea, made one stop in awe to wonder why it is and whence come the great forces that drive it on. At times, as one questions how best to describe the one small chapter of the story of Verdun with which one is familiar, there comes a terrible feeling of disgust that any attempt should be made to put into words things that have been recorded already in the blood of some members of practically every family in France. It is a sacrilege to make the attempt, and any one who reads such efforts to describe this terrific struggle must remember that words do not count, but that the real story, the real evidence, is found only in the pain and suffering and loss of life of a nation's great.

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### SERVICE AT VERDUN

THE first night of our service at Verdun began. Fifteen of our twenty cars "rolled" along the main Verdun road past the long line of *camions*, ammunition wagons, and soup kitchens; then into the city itself, through the ruins of the heavily shelled district and across the river to a small *poste* just in the outskirts of the town. All about us in this suburb of Verdun were batteries of "75" or "105" or "220" guns, all firing at regular intervals up over the projecting cliff and upon the German positions beyond.

Occasionally the Germans sent an answering shell, and the men in the neighborhood would seek safety in the many *abris* close by. That night the Germans were making a gas attack, and they threw thousands of gas-shells upon the French trenches and beyond, to interfere with the *ravitaillement*. The gas reached us, and men not equipped with proper masks began to cough and choke and gag, and were sent deep into a cellar where the air was still fresh. The time for us to go to the advance *poste* and start bringing in the wounded arrived; but the road had been blocked by incendiary bombs which had set a house on fire. About an hour later this was cleared and we could begin our work. Happily also at about that time there was a severe thunderstorm, the breeze and rain of which cleared away the gas.

This road to the advance *poste*, Bras, ran along the side of the river a short distance, when it turned to the right off over the field, passing between a row of trees, then through a wood, and finally over the fields again until it reached Bras. Due to the blockade earlier in the evening, this road was covered with traffic of one sort and another, and it was difficult, terribly difficult sometimes, to get through, the darkness of the night and the need for haste making the danger of a smash-up exceedingly great. One French phrase will always remain in the vocabulary of the American ambulance drivers even if every other

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word of the language be forgotten. It is "*à droite, à droite,*" which has saved men and machines many times.

### BRAS

ON arriving at Bras, a town of mines, we found a great number of wounded and men suffering from gas poisoning. It was terrible to see their eagerness to get back and farther back from the horrors they had left. Our work lasted till daylight, when it was impossible to pass over the road as it was in plain view of the Germans. Once daylight came, however, there yet remained the task of carrying to Verdun those wounded we had brought down from Bras, and from Verdun back inland again to the first stationary hospital. This work kept us "rolling" on till nine o'clock in the morning when other men took it up and completed it later in the day.

The next night there was no gas attack and we could begin our work promptly just after dark. But while we did n't have the terror of the gas, we were made to realize the terror of the shrapnel shells and high-explosives. One of our drivers had the front of his car broken open and two men were killed beside it, while he just saved himself by sliding under the car when he heard the whistle. Another man had a shrapnel bullet pierce his purse and stop; and another was bruised in the ankle by a stone driven by the near-by explosion of a shell. The cars, with the one exception just mentioned, were untouched, and the work went on till daybreak made it too dangerous to stay, when began the work of carrying the wounded, gas-poisoned, and burnt, back from Verdun.

The next night was much the same thing as the previous one; but as it is fairly representative, it is well to consider it in detail. The first man goes at about 9.30; then another, followed by two more. The first man returns and reports lots of wounded, shelling of the road, and much traffic passing out. Five other men go. They meet first some loose horses and then a man riding a horse at a gallop back toward us. A shriek, *à droite*, just keeps him

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from running into the cars, and as he passes he cries out in turn, "*Tir de barrage.*" We soon come to a block of long lines of traffic, and are told we can't go farther. But by dint of much urging and squeezing, we finally reach the head of the line, where we find a terrible mix-up of dead and dying horses and men. Then begins the *tir de barrage* again, and the shrill whistle of an approaching shell gives warning that it is coming to kill. We crouch low, hoping nothing may happen. Then comes another and another, and one close enough to cause the rattle of pebbles about us; but the others are wild shots. Now they cease and for the moment we thank God for the darkness that hides us and the immense crowd of wagons about us from the eyes of the Germans.

Then some one takes a chance, finds there is room to pass in the ditch at the side of the road, and the block gradually clears. We are able now to move on, after removing the body of the man just ahead of us, and at last succeed in arriving at Bras. One of the five, however, remains behind to pick up the wounded from about the road. If luck had been with us we could have got a load and returned; but we are compelled to wait, and while we wait some German shells begin to find the town and we go to the cellar. A rattle of *éclats* and stones tells of one near shot. But now we can get our wounded and we start back, picking our way carefully about some of the large shell-holes that fill the roads in the town.

We roll on, but only to be stopped farther down by another block. This time we stay where we are, waiting for the block to be cleared, while the air is alive above us with the passing shells, both French and German. Beside us in the fields near the roads, batteries are going off at regular intervals. Far off to the right in the direction of Mort Homme, a terrific bombardment is on and the whole horizon is a line of flashing lights. Back of us are rising and falling German and French star-bombs which throw a light that to us seems enough to disclose our whereabouts.



AN UNDERGROUND "POSTE"



ONCE AN AVENUE OF STATELY TREES



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The block clears, and we pass on and come without hindrance to the top of a long hill that leads down into the valley where lies Verdun. Below us is booming forth a series of sounds from the "105" French battery, and it seems as if the shells must graze us as they pass on toward their goal among the Germans. It is but a short distance then to the *poste* in Verdun, and we discharge our wounded to start on a second trip which repeats with little variation the experiences of the first. Then comes a third, and for one or two men, a fourth.

The next night the same things were repeated in varying degrees. Perhaps that night you did n't have the frightful *tir de barrage*, but you had a narrow escape from being smashed by an artillery wagon coming full tilt past the quarry which was often a mark for the German shells. Perhaps you had some frightful moments when, listening to the pleas of the wounded and nerve-shattered men along the road, you took a heavier load than a Ford could stand and then found yourself rocking and rolling and smashing through some deep shell-holes you had forgotten, amid the cries of the frightened wounded. Perhaps that night your machine was caught and held by tangled barbed wire and you had to be cut free. These were all part of some man's experiences if not the experiences of all of us.

Such in brief and very imperfect outline were some of the things we did and felt and saw during the eight terrible days of strain at Verdun; and when the moment came for our release, it was like casting off great weights of lead. But if the strain upon us, who really could not have seen more than a small part of the horror of this struggle, was so great, what must be said of the endurance and suffering of the soldiers who saw it all and endured it all?

ALWYN INNESS-BROWN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Charleston, South Carolina; University of Virginia; entered the Field Service in April, 1916, and served for nine months; later Captain, U.S.A. Sanitary Corps.

## VII

### THE GLORY OF THE FRENCH

I HAVE noticed that French soldiers everywhere are most eager to talk and make friends with us Americans, and they are the most sympathetic, appreciative, and generous people I have ever known. They often run across the street just to shake hands with us or say a word or two, and invite us to have a glass of wine with them which they in their unbounded generosity always want to pay for. It hurts me to see them reach down into their jeans for their meagre change, and I can never allow them to treat me out of their small and hard-earned savings. Whatever they have, however, is yours if you want it.

*Ligny, June 10, 1916*

As I was walking through the town to-day a French soldier called to me from across the street and said he had a present he wished to give me. He then produced from his pocket an English copy of "Robinson Crusoe," which in his simple and unconventional way he presented to me, after writing his name and a few words in the front of it — a perfect example of the genuineness of the French spirit.

*Condé, Monday, June 12*

YESTERDAY dawned with heavy rain. I packed up my regular load of section material, which is allotted to me to carry from place to place as we travel, and we proceeded to Bar-le-Duc once more on our way to Verdun. We stopped there to eat, and after lunch we went on farther to the little town of Condé, recalling the Duke of Condé, and drew up our machines in a barnyard. I noticed that the lady at the farmhouse by which we had stopped was crying. At first we thought it was because

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she did not like us to stop on her premises; but we soon learned that she had more reason than that for her grief, for she had just received a letter saying that her only son had been killed on the battle-field. She recovered her composure soon, however, and extended rare hospitality to us. Wonderful people are the French!

It has rained here for more than a week, and the old story is certainly an apt one — when a soldier walks in French mud and lifts up one foot, he is sure all of France is clinging to it, but finds he is mistaken, for when he lifts the other, he discovers that half of France is there! Here we see long files of troops going to and returning from the front.

*June 22*

LATE this afternoon Mr. Hill asked a few of us if we wanted to accompany him and the French Lieutenant on a trip to our future working-ground. We were eager to go, and taking our gas-masks with us and putting on our iron derbies, we set off. I was in the French Lieutenant's car — a Berliet — and here began what proved to be the most interesting four hours that I have had since I joined the American Field Service. We took a "switch road" to Verdun, getting onto the main road when we were halfway there. It was twilight and the countryside with the setting sun glow on it was beautiful. On the hillsides could be seen the French encampments and hospitals, and over the roads — we were continually in sight of two besides the one we were on — were passing constant streams of traffic to and from Verdun. Ahead of us and at the right could be seen continual flashes of light which grew brighter and brighter, and the cannonading grew louder and louder as we neared the trenches.

Passing through the outskirts of the city we came to the ancient walls, gateways, and moat of Verdun, and once in Verdun the sight was like a three-ringed circus, so many things claiming one's notice at a time that it was hard to determine just where to fix one's attention.

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Verdun was absolutely deserted and in complete ruin; I saw no stores and but a few walls were left standing. *Débris* was piled so high on both sides of the road and took up so much space that there was only enough room left for one machine to pass at a time. There was not a light to be seen in the town, and no horns or klaxons were supposed to be used. Shells shot by us over our heads, but so near that the noise was deafening.

We finally drew up at an American Field Service *poste* in Verdun, where I saw the first signs of life anywhere. Here we met the American boys who had been doing the work we were about to begin. There were twelve of them who had had five days of it and were to leave in the morning. Each ambulance section is assigned to an army division, follows it to the front, and when it leaves, the ambulance section leaves also. The division sometimes stays until about forty per cent have been killed or wounded. During the past five days fourteen of their ambulance cars have been hit by shells or scattering fragments; two of the twelve men have been wounded, and I was not surprised to find them rather glad to get away from the lines.

### VERDUN TO BRAS

THE road from Verdun to Bras is dangerous, filled as it is with deep shell-holes, and it leads along a very difficult way. There is a choice of two roads to Bras; but one was under constant fire, so we were forced to take the other, proceeding along this road up to the very top of a steep cliff, below which are the French guns and beyond which are the trenches. It was at this point that we heard explosions the din of which more than doubly eclipsed anything we had previously heard. They were simply tremendous. We were at that point which is the very muzzle of some big French guns, and because the Germans are most anxious to get the "battery," they direct their heaviest firing against it. We had to go as fast as we could in order to escape the shells, and yet we had to go cau-

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tiously enough to avoid the terrible holes in the road, some of which were five or six feet deep and as big as the machine itself. I was almost hurled from the back to the front seat of the machine when Mr. Hill, going twelve miles an hour, hit one of these holes. We got out of it soon, however, and approached a bridge, about the only bridge that the Germans have not taken in that locality, and they want that badly. It was under intermittent fire all the time, and we were supposed to stop if shelling were going on and wait for it to cease. All along the roadside was a deep trench into which we could go if the shell-ing became too severe. We soon approached Bras, where great rockets kept flashing out green, yellow, and red star-bombs, lighting up the sky and exposing the enemy's trenches.

Bras is simply a ruined village. At one spot just off the field of battle is a sort of first-aid station to which the stretcher-bearers carry the wounded from the field. If anything can be done to ease temporarily their suffering, they are taken at once down into the cellar and treated. It is there that we are to get our *blessés*, and from there we are to take them back to the *poste* at Verdun. Every trip from Bras to Verdun has to be made between the hours of 9 P.M. and 2 A.M. No traffic goes over that road in daylight. The week before our arrival, an ambulance had been sent out during the daytime and as a result was shelled and hit twice. After treatment at the Verdun *poste*, the wounded are taken in daylight to Baleycourt beyond Verdun and put in the rear hospitals. It is at Baleycourt that our encampment is to be. There is a cellar at the Verdun *poste* where the boys can catch a wink of sleep, if possible, between trips.

Baleycourt, June 24

As per order we left promptly at 8.30 yesterday for Verdun. The camp which is to be our eating and sleeping place is in this little town of Baleycourt, about seven miles from Verdun. We pulled up here in the usual

fashion, our ambulances lined up straight before the camp, and pitched our tent, in which we set the beds which we have carried all the way from Nancy. It was very hot, and being one of the first to arrive I pushed my cot up into the corner by the door so as to get plenty of air. Whenever we pitch camp, it always reminds me of a Western land-lottery in our own country. Every one rushes into the tent with some of his possessions — suitcase, bag, or bed — and flings them down in a desirable place, so that, later, his chosen spot is claimed by prior right of possession.

### LOST IN VERDUN

June 25

BEFORE going to bed last night I learned that I was to be on duty for the twenty-four-hour stretch to-day, and I went to sleep anticipating some new experiences, especially as the men sent out the night before had run into a heavy gas attack and had come back with their eyes inflamed, paining terribly, and their lungs choked up. I was called to work at seven this morning, and made the trip to the hospital at Baleycourt for a load of wounded whom I evacuated to Queue-de-Mala farther back. I had no sooner returned to camp than Clark suggested that I had better help him evacuate the wounded from Verdun, as that job was getting ahead of him. I accordingly started for Verdun, entered by the wrong gate, and was completely lost for some time. This is no fun, getting lost in Verdun, for there is scarcely a man to be seen on the streets, and if by chance you do see one, he is sure to be on the run to the nearest cellar. People know better than to promenade in Verdun! I finally got my bearings, and after getting some horribly wounded men, I returned to our *poste*, after which I made several of these trips. Often I would notice fresh shell-holes in the road, which had to be filled in, and quantities of *débris*, which had to be cleared away, before I could proceed, so narrow was the way. Occasionally a dead horse had to be put aside

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from the road. During one trip two of the poor fellows I had in my ambulance died before arriving at the hospital, and as the attendants took another out of the car they noticed that he looked deathly white and lifeless, when one of them said, "He is dead, is n't he?" "Yes, he is dead," replied the other as they proceeded to leave him; but the wretched soldier spoke up for himself at this point, and said feebly, "No, I am *not* dead," and so they carried him in with the others.

June 26

It was six o'clock yesterday before I lay off for supper and a general fixing-up of my car for the evening work. When the time came for us to set out, we left in pairs at intervals of five minutes. Munroe and I started out together, and here began for me one of the worst nights I have ever experienced. We arrived at our *poste* at Verdun all right, and in half an hour we went on toward the Croix-de-Fer, which is two thirds of the way to Bras, to get the wounded there. I started back before Munroe was ready, with five wounded in my machine. Driving on a dark night over a narrow road full of shell-holes with five wounded mortals is bad enough, but when in addition to this it rains pitchforks and lightning flashes continually, it is much worse. The lightning absolutely blinded me so that I could not see an inch of the road, while all the time passing on both sides of me were great streams of infantry, cavalry, carts, and trucks; consequently many were the collisions and scrapings that night. We were never allowed to use our horns, and would press on desperately until, hitting some one, we would back up, get out of the mess, and start on again.

Finally, I reached my destination, filled my car with injured soldiers, and started back. Nearing Verdun I missed the road I was supposed to turn in on and lost my way entirely. Lost in the dead of night between Verdun and the trenches, my ambulance full of wounded men! I was desperate. I drove my car back and forth, in and out,

in great confusion of mind, into all sorts of places. Failing to find the right way, I at last gave up in despair and decided to wait until it began to grow a little lighter, although I knew that this would be a dangerous thing to do. Then I thought of the poor fellows in my car and decided I *must* devise some way of getting them back. It at last occurred to me, if I could discover the railroad station in Verdun, I could, since I knew the location of that place, find my way onto the road I usually took. This I decided to do even though it was quite a distance out of the way; and after inquiring of several men who did n't seem to understand what I was trying to get at, I got one of the less injured soldiers in my ambulance to get information in French from one of them and in turn direct me how to go. In this way, although I was side-tracked several times, I made my way towards the railroad station. Before reaching it, however, I came, by accident, upon the old familiar road and made my way straight to our *poste*. When I arrived there I was in a state of nervous exhaustion.

### WOUNDED

*In the French Military Hospital, Vadelaincourt*

ABOUT four o'clock on the afternoon of June 30, we were all seated around our camp when we heard shells dropping within a mile of us and learned that our large front hospital was being shelled. Our work was to carry wounded from this hospital to one farther back, which was not so likely to be shelled. After leaving Vadelaincourt, I started out for Verdun at 8.45, and at 10 o'clock Dawson and I got orders to go to Bras. Before we started, Dawson said, "Barber, if we get into very thick fire, just stop and we will get under our cars and wait until it is over." I agreed and we started off. The night was very cloudy and the darkness was intensified by the heavy overhanging foliage of the trees. Everything went as well as ever at first, and I arrived at Bras before Dawson. I loaded three *blessés* into my ambulance and started back to Verdun.

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I passed Dawson's car not far out, grimly standing by the roadside *en panne*. I had not gone far from Bras when the shelling became very heavy. I climbed out of my car, and after instructing the wounded soldier with whom I was sharing my seat to get under the car, I did so myself. We stayed there ten or fifteen minutes until shells began to explode back of us, and I thought it would be better for us to jump into the machine and make a dash for Verdun before another volley of shells was sent ahead of us.

I got out from under the car and walked around to the front of it. This, however, is where I made my fatal mistake, for no sooner had I left the protection of the machine than I recognized the shrill whistle and swish of what seemed to me to be the largest *obus* that I had ever heard. The loudness of the noise was probably caused by the nearness of the shell. I had stooped in front of the car's radiator to gain its protection and when the shell exploded, I saw for an instant a great band of flame around my stomach and for the moment I thought surely the end had come. I noticed that my car was ruined. The rear was completely demolished and every one of my three wounded men killed. Recovering a little from my dazed condition, I distinctly remember trying out my various faculties. I found out that I could still breathe, with difficulty, however, for every respiration hurt my lungs; I tried to walk and succeeded, with pain, however; I could see with both eyes and could swallow, and I still had my two arms.

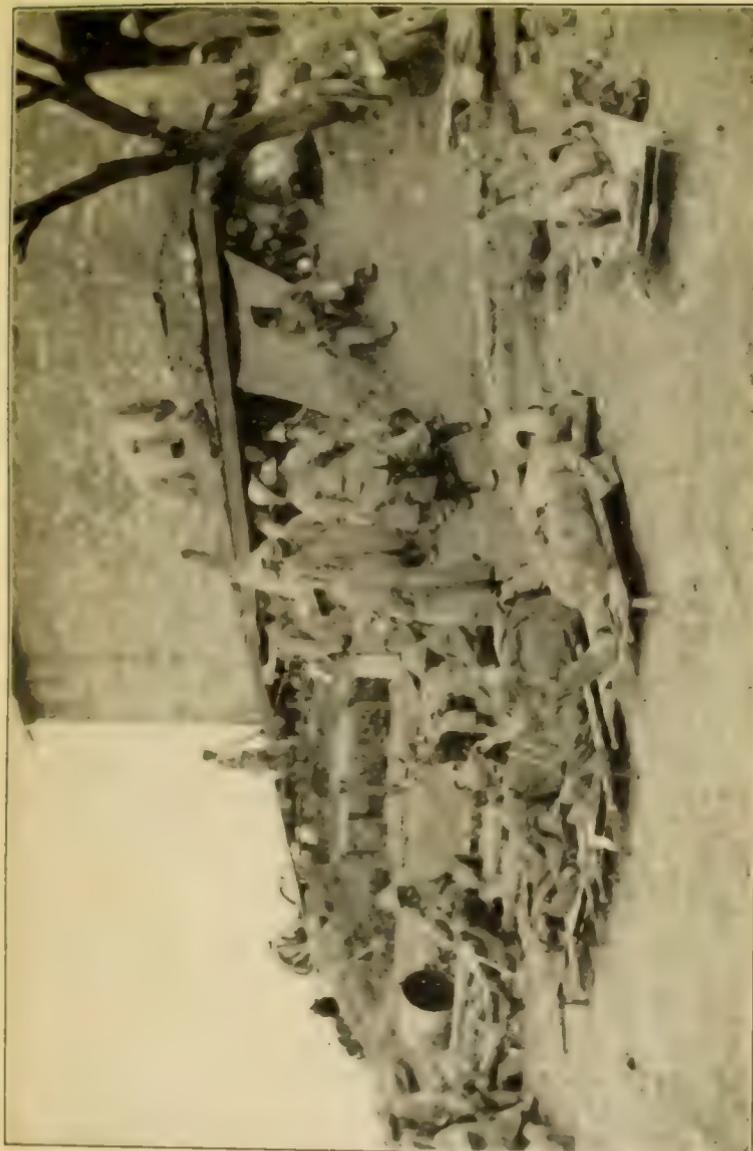
At this point I began to feel a sharp, stinging sensation all over my body, became very weak and could only stagger along. I was in great pain. It was agony to breathe. My legs and back hurt, and I reasoned out that I must have been struck by pieces of shell in numerous parts of my body. I struggled along a few yards on the road and then fell prostrate. I thought if I could only get back to Verdun some way, I could be fixed up. As I lay there on the road helpless, it occurred to me that when the next ambulance came along I could call out the name of one

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of the drivers, get in an English word or two, and perhaps thus attract his attention. In about fifteen minutes one loomed in sight, coming down the road with great speed, whereupon I yelled out the first name I thought of, that of a boy in our Section, "Tison, Tison!" The scheme worked, and although Wheeler was driving he pulled up with "What's the matter here?" A soldier whom I had spoken to explained to Wheeler the situation, and I called to him from the other side of the road where I lay under a soup cart. When he found out that I was hurt, he jumped out of his car and helped me over to it. The shelling was continuing very heavily, and I thought we had better get under his car until it subsided a bit. We stayed under the car for a few minutes, but Wheeler finally dragged me out and placed me on the floor of the front seat of his ambulance. He was already sharing his seat with one wounded soldier, and another fellow, who was eager to be taken back to Verdun, climbed onto the car, too. Wheeler told him to get off, but he insisted that he would be needed to hold me on, which he did all the way back. This made seven in the car already, and in the excitement of the moment another had jumped onto the other side of the machine. In a hurry to get me to Verdun, Wheeler with his load went at top speed over a dark, muddy, thickly travelled road. It was a masterpiece of driving. I was by this time very weak; but we had come upon Bluethenthal,<sup>1</sup> who gave me water from his canteen, which revived me somewhat. Wheeler, intent upon getting me to Verdun as quickly as possible, got out of his car at the bridge over the canal, ran across, and succeeded in getting some passing troops to stop long enough for us to go over, so that we finally got through the gates of Verdun and drew up at our *poste*. There I was taken in, injected for lockjaw and my wounds bound up a bit,

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Bluethenthal, of Wilmington, North Carolina; Princeton, '13; joined the Field Service in May, 1916, serving with Section Three in France and Salonica until May, 1917, when he entered the French Aviation Service; he was killed in July, 1918, at the front, when his machine was shot down in flames.



AT A DRESSING-STATION NEAR VERDUN



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when it was found that I was hurt in over twenty-five places. Later at the Vadelaincourt Hospital I was laid on the operating-table and chloroformed, which was all I knew until I awoke the next morning, bound up in bandages, in a long room with a row of cots on each side.

### IN THE HOSPITAL

THEN followed three or four of the most uncomfortable days I have ever spent. I was comfortable in no position, my body paining me on all sides, and the ringing in my ears continuing. For three days I was not allowed to eat or drink. Some French officers came into the hospital a few days later, inquired for me, came up to my bed, said a lot in French which I did not understand; this much, however, I did get: "In the name of the French Republic, we have the honor to confer upon you, as a reward for your services, the *Médaille Militaire*" — which they then and there pinned on my nightshirt, shook hands with me, and departed. This was quite a compliment, although I could not feel that I deserved such a distinction, since I had done no more than the other boys. Some of them came in to see me every day, and General Pétain, commander of the army of Verdun, visited the ward and shook hands with me.

At my second operation the surgeon took out of me a piece of my Ford radiator as big as the end of my middle finger. My radiator always had given me trouble! Some of the boys who came to see me brought with them a handful of shots which they had taken out of my car the day after I was wounded, and said they could have brought me a basketful. Every once in a while, little pieces of shell would be removed from my body, but I had no more serious operations.

The ambulance I had been driving was given by Mr. and Mrs. Allston Burr, of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts, in memory of their nephew, Francis Hardon Burr, and as soon as they learned that it had been demolished, they immediately replaced it by a new one.

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When I began looking around me in the hospital, I recognized several *blessés* whom I had carried in my ambulance on previous days. I spent a peculiar Fourth of July, the only feature of it for me being a small American flag which my nurse gave me and which I stuck on the wall by my bed. In the evening, an American from Section Four came in to see me and brought me a bottle of champagne and a sack of apricots. He was the cheeriest fellow I ever met, and though he stayed but five minutes with me, the spirit he put into me remained with me for the rest of the night. Balsley, the American aviator who was seriously injured in his encounter with three German airplanes at once, was in the same hospital. He wrote me a very friendly note and sent me some of his magazines to read, and I sent him in return a London newspaper giving details of his own experiences and those of Chapman, who was on his way to get oranges for Balsley when he was killed by a German shell. I had not been long in the hospital at Vadelaincourt before the Section, in which I had been, moved back to Ligny, and though I missed their coming in to see me, I was glad for their sakes that the dangerous part of their work was over for a while at least.

WILLIAM M. BARBER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Toledo, Ohio; Oberlin, '19; left college May, 1916, for ambulance work in France; was severely wounded during his first month at the front and invalided home; received the *Médaille Militaire*. In 1918 became an *aspirant* in French artillery.



## VIII

### VERDUN DAYS AND NIGHTS

*June 22, 1916*

TWELVE of our men were out last night on the Bras service and struck the edge of a gas attack. One of them gave me a cigarette this morning from the case he had carried, but it reeked so of gas that I could n't smoke it. The air here was tainted with gas all the morning, but whether from the patients or from the occasional shell that struck in the woods above, I could not tell. The gas patients are in a terrible state, those less affected coughing and choking continually; but the others are far beyond that. Two of us took the less desperate cases on to the evacuation camp at Queue-de-Mala; the others went down the hill on stretchers — uncovered, for treatment — with blanketed face, for burial. After twelve hours' work and about ten trips apiece, we came in for supper, utterly unrecognizable in our masks of dust.

*Bras, June 30*

DURING the shelling of the road last night, I found myself repeating the chorus we had sung those long months ago in Mirecourt:

*"Hardis, mes gars! C'est pour la France."*

We shall have only one night more here. As I waited for my last load, sitting on the end of the sandbag wall, I looked about me. A pace inside the doorway rose the piled débris and wreckage of the house, and above it a weird perspective of broken beams and masonry against the morning stars. I wondered if I should ever return to walk in safety up these dark hills of fear. We are leaving to-morrow, and very soon I am leaving France — leaving it with a fading memory of things unreal, and with a great gladness that in some slight way I have been able to

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bring a message of sympathy to her in her time of agony and travail.

*"Hardis, mes gars ! C'est pour la France."*

WALTER KERR RAINSFORD<sup>1</sup>

*Verdun, June, 1916*

IT IS AN EXTRAORDINARY AND EXHILARATING FEELING TO BE actually taking part in the greatest battle of history, in a front-row seat, so to speak. Those who declare that there is nothing picturesque about modern warfare are all off. It is gorgeous.

*July 10*

OUR RUN FROM VERDUN TO BRAS WAS OVER A ROAD WHICH WAS shelled intermittently every night. Looking back on those ten days (we are now *en repos*), I feel that it was perfectly miraculous our getting away with only one man badly wounded. Half the cars have holes in them from éclats, two or three men were grazed by shrapnel, and one bullet actually lodged in Waldo Peirce's pocket-book in the most approved melodramatic manner.

The night after our arrival, the Germans launched a gas attack, which is about the most unpleasant thing imaginable. Fortunately, we had been equipped with gas-masks that really fitted and which were entirely effective; but it was impossible to see through them clearly enough to drive a car, so that when actually on the road we had to go without them. Most of the gas was of the "*lacrimogène*" variety, which merely makes your eyes run and your throat sting; but out toward Bras one got a whiff of the chlorine, which is fearful. Many of those whom we brought in overcome died soon after in horrible agony. We all noticed, as a curious after-effect of the gas, that for days afterwards cigarettes tasted like the most horrible sulphur fumes, and all liquor like powerful acid.

It is really an extraordinary experience to be right in

<sup>1</sup> The above is from Mr. Rainsford's diary.

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the thick of the most acute stage of this terrific battle, where, second only to the wonderful fortitude of the French wounded, who are always magnificent, is the really heroic behavior of the *brancardiers*, who crawl out between the lines and carry in wounded on their backs. To me it seems that their work requires more real courage than any other branch of the service.

CHARLES R. CODMAN, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston; Harvard, '15; member of the Field Service from March, 1915; subsequently entered the U.S. Aviation Service and was taken prisoner. These extracts are from home letters.



## IX

### EN REPOS AFTER VERDUN

July 3, 1916

WE are back, far back of the lines, *en repos*, with the tattered remains of our French division. We have just come back from two weeks at Verdun and our cars are battered and broken beyond a year's ordinary service. It began strong. The first night I was off duty and missed out on one disagreeable experience — a gas attack. One has to breathe through a little bag affair packed with layers of cloth and chemicals! The eyes are also protected with tight-fitting isinglass, which mists over and makes driving difficult. The road was not shelled that night, so things might have been worse.

The second night was my go. We rolled all night from the *poste de secours* back to the first sorting-station. The *poste* was in a little town with the Germans on three sides of the road and all in full view of them, which made daylight going impossible. The day work was evacuating from sorting-stations to field hospitals. There our work stopped. English and French sections worked from there back to the base hospitals. The road ran out through fields and a little stretch of woods, with French batteries situated on both sides the entire way, which drew the fire. Four trips between dusk and dawn were the most possible. The noise of French fire was terrifying until we learned to distinguish it from the German *arrivées*. It is important to know the difference, and one soon learns. The *départ* is a sharp bark and then the whistle diminishing. The *arrivées* come in with a slower, increasing whistle and ripping crash. In noise alone it is more than disagreeable. The *poste de secours* was an *abri* in a cellar.

Of the town there was scarcely a wall standing — *marmites* had done their work well. The road was an open

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space between, scalloped and scooped like the moon in miniature. We would drive up, crawling in and out of these holes, turn around, get our load, and go. When the place was shelled, we had time to hear the *obus* coming and dive under our cars. The drive back was harrowing. One was sure to go a little too fast on a stretch of road that felt smooth and then pitch into a hole, all but breaking every spring on the body. I'll never forget the screams of the wounded as they got rocked about inside. At times a stretcher would break and we would have to go on as it was. Of course we had to drive in utter darkness, with passing *convois* of artillery at a full gallop going in opposite directions on either side. Each night a bit more of tool box or mud-guard would be taken off. Often I found myself in a wedge where I had to back and go forward until a little hole was found to skip through, and then make a dash for it and take a chance. One night there was a thunderstorm with vivid lightning and pitch darkness. The flashes of guns and of lightning were as one, and the noise terrific. That night, too, the road was crowded with ammunition wagons. But worst of all, it was under shell-fire in three places so that traffic became demoralized because of the dead horses and wrecked wagons smashed up by shrapnel. All our cars were held up in parts of this road. There is no feeling of more utter helplessness than being jammed in between cannon and caissons in a road under shell-fire. In order to get through, two of the men had to run ahead and cut loose dead horses; but no one was hit that night.

The next night was the climax of danger, as things eased off a bit after; but the strain was telling and our driving was not so skilful. For instance, next to the last night I collided with a huge *ravitaillement* wagon coming at full gallop on the wrong side of the road, with the result that the entire front of my car went into bow knots. But I landed clear in safety. This occurred under the lee of a cliff, so we went in search with a wrecking-car the next day. After twenty hours my car was running again, shaky

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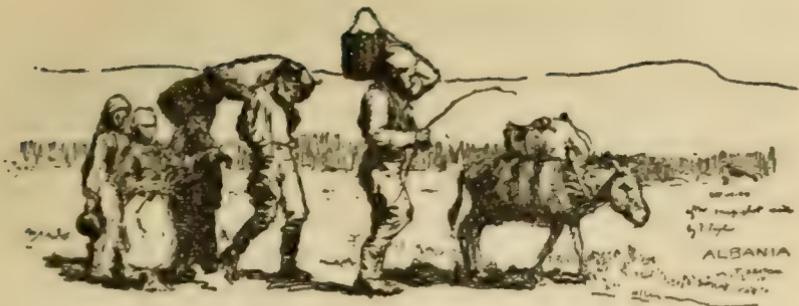
on her wheels, but strong in engine. She goes to Paris soon for shop repairs. Poor old Alice! A wrecked car in so short a time! Patched with string and wire and straps, she looks battle-scarred to a degree. Her real battle souvenirs are five shrapnel balls embedded in the roof and sides. I don't believe in collecting souvenirs, but these I could not help preserving!

There were humorous incidents; that is, humorous when we look back on them safely in camp. One goes as follows: Three cars running out to the *poste* about thirty yards apart. The whistle of shells and a great increase in speed in the cars. (Somehow speed seems to give the feeling of more security.) Road getting too hot — shells falling between the cars as they run. First car stopped short and driver jumped about thirty feet into a trench by the roadside. Landed in six inches of water and stayed. Car No. 2 stopped, but not short enough to prevent smashing into tail-board of No. 1. Driver made jump and splash No. 2 into trench. Ditto for car No. 3 (me). Whistle and bang of shells, crash of hitting cars, and splash of falling men in water. Here we remained until the "storm blew over."

I am mighty glad we are through and out of it all. Whatever action we go into again, it cannot be harder or more dangerous than what we have been through. That will be impossible. I don't yet know whether I am glad or not to have had such an experience. It was all so gigantic and terrifying. It was war in its worst butchery. We all of us lost weight, but health and morale are O.K., and we are ready for more work after a rest.

EDWARD I. TINKHAM<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Montclair, New Jersey; Cornell, '17; served in Sections Three and Four, and commanded in 1917 the first Motor Transport Section sent out by the Field Service; subsequently entered naval aviation, in which service he died in Ravenna, Italy, March 30, 1919.



## II. *In the Orient*

Tout vient vers elle et tout en part;  
Elle est le progrès, elle est l'art,  
Sol qui produit, peuple qui pense.  
Gloire à la France!

PAUL DÉROULÈDE

### I

#### EN ROUTE TO THE ORIENT

*October 25, 1916*

TO-DAY will be our fifth day at sea. We left Marseilles on Saturday in a strong mistral, and packed our bags and blanket-rolls in our bunks down in the hold along with a great number of Indo-Chinamen. We were on the lowest deck. The bunks were in tiers of two and squares of eight, merely steel or tin braces like those of a strawberry crate. We stayed there till five o'clock when Lovering Hill made arrangements to move us up a deck nearer the open air. We moved. The Chinamen moved down at the same time. Such confusion! These Chinese are so small and yellow that you cannot tell them from their khaki packs. They bumped us and jabbered like monkeys. We bumped them and cursed. They continued jabbering. Their talk is a funny, monkeyish twang. At about 6.30 that night we were fed on the deck, although we looked longingly at the officers' mess-room. It got dark early, and we retired early. Luckily Hill gave me a chance to sleep on the floor of his cabin, so I did n't have to go below. Some of the fellows slept on the floor of what was once the smoking-

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room on this ship. I saw George Hollister<sup>1</sup> that night tuck himself away in an upper bunk way back in the dark against the side of the boat. Hill made arrangements to have us eat in the officers' mess twice a day, which is enough. Then he arranged to have us all sleep in the smoking-room. Since then we have been comfortable.

If you never have travelled on a real transport, I may tell you in passing that you are better off where you are. First of all, every one is packed in as we were the first night; the deck space is filled with cargo, and men occupy the upper deck in great numbers. Rancid smells come up from below, for the sewerage system is not working. The sanitary arrangements aft, where most of the Indo-Chinks are, were put out of commission the first night; so nobody with a keen sense of smell can go near there. Food is being cooked all the time; and a stuffy breeze comes up from the kitchen, which is on the main deck amidships. The calf and the pig aboard are dirty, and their companions, some horses and cows, are not things of beauty either.

*October 27*

YESTERDAY we were developed into mariners. The commander of the ship got us all to stand watch, as we were in dangerous waters all day and night. We had posts during the day at the bow, on deck below the bridge, amidships on the same deck, on the bridge, and at the stern. From 1.40 until 5.40 Fenton and I were on duty up at the bow, when I looked so hard for periscopes or mines that I saw all sorts of things. Finally at four o'clock we saw land way off in the distance. Due to our zigzagging, it was on the port side one minute, straight ahead the next, and on the starboard side the next. Then we saw islands across our bow — low-lying objects hardly

<sup>1</sup> George Merrick Hollister, of Grand Rapids, Michigan; Harvard, '18; served with Section Three from February, 1916, to May, 1917; he later became a Second Lieutenant in the United States Infantry; killed in action October, 1918.

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distinguishable from clouds. We were finally relieved by some Frenchmen.

At eight o'clock I went on watch at the stern till 11 P.M., when George Hollister replaced me, and he stayed on till 2 A.M., when he was relieved. All this time, up to eight this morning, our Section was on watch along with the regular crew. It was strange, to say the least, to see an *ambulancier* pacing the bridge along with the captain.

At night we passed many lights, on shore no doubt. There was a boat, however, which passed, that flashed "phoney" signals, which we did n't answer. The captain was excited and did not breathe easy for a long time. During my watch from eight to eleven a dead "Chink" was heaved overboard in a box. That makes two.

October 28

I WENT on watch at two last night on the bridge with George Hollister. We were relieved at five o'clock. We followed along a mountainous shore all night. Warships signalled us at times, and a torpedo boat came up behind us. It looked for all the world like a submarine, but no one on the bridge got excited about it. The morning star came up about 3.30. It looked like a *fusée éclairante* at the front. I never saw a bigger or more beautiful star. It was still dark when we were relieved. George went to bed, but I stayed up on the bridge to watch the dawn come. Off to the right the sky brightened and turned a very brilliant red. Low land was silhouetted against it. On our left two snow-tipped mountain-peaks glistened in the light. The lower sides of the mountains were purplish and brown. A few white houses showed themselves.

CHARLES BAIRD, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '11; entered the Service in July, 1916, and served in Sections Two and Three; subsequently became a First Lieutenant and later a Captain in the United States Field Artillery. The above are extracts from Mr. Baird's home letters.

## II

### SALONICA

*En route* to the Balkans, we arrived in the harbor of Salonica on the morning of October 28, 1916, and disembarked on the evening of the following day. The port and town were the scene of great activity, and were very picturesque with the presence of natives from almost every country under the sun, and the streets packed with strange costumes. The town, I noted, has its walls still standing, with a sort of fortress above it; a Turkish quarter, which looks very pretty from the sea, with its heaps of little wooden houses painted blue, rising one above the other; and plenty of minarets, very white in the early sunshine, and very lovely to our ocean-weary eyes.

There were a few cases of spinal meningitis among the native troops on board our ship, and at first it was a question of being quarantined with said fellow travellers. So the Lieutenant in command of the troops and I immediately began trying to arrange our cantonment in the *Camp des Orientaux*, where the proposed internment was to take place. Fortunately, however, at lunch-time the decree was revoked, and we were ordered to join our service at the *Parc de Réserve*, where we would be quartered.

Arrived there, we found that no one had ever heard of us, that there was no place to lodge us, and that it was impossible to feed us. So I let every one shift for himself for dinner, and those of us who could n't find room, slept out in an open lot. Fortunately the weather continued fine, and the next morning we got three Marabout tents which we pitched at once; just in time, in fact, for it started to pour as the last one went up. In this matter of weather, by the way, we had the most astounding good luck. Even the sea was as smooth as a pond during the

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whole voyage. I don't know what we should have done on board if it had been otherwise, for living between decks was out of the question on account of the native troops.

LOVERING HILL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '10; entered the Field Service in November, 1914, where he became Section Commander, and in 1917 a Captain in the United States Field Artillery.



### III

## INTO THE BALKANS

THE first flicker of dawn was showing as we wound our way down through the outlying parts of Salonica, a sinuous line of ambulances and auxiliary cars. On the water front the convoy halted for final adjustment. The foreglow, coming across the harbor, filtered through the spars of the shipping and gave promise of a clear day. A few early porters and rugged stevedores paused to gaze wonderingly upon us. The C.O. passed down the line to see if all were ready; the whistle sounded and we were off.

Passing through the already livening streets we paralleled the quay, turned toward the northwest and then, as the muezzins in the minarets were calling upon the faithful to greet the rising sun, entered upon the great caravan trail which runs back into the mountains, and Allah knows where. Past trains of little mountain ponies, laden with hides; past lumbering, solid-wheeled wagons, drawn by water buffaloes and piled high with roughly baled tobacco, tobacco from which are made some of the choicest Turkish cigarettes in the world; past other wagons with towering piles of coarse native matting; past the herdsman and his flock, his ballet skirt blowing in the morning breeze; past the solemn Turk, mounted athwart his drooping burro, his veiled woman trudging behind. The city lay behind us now; the passers-by became fewer, until only an occasional wayfarer and his burro were sighted. The road, pitted and gutted, stretched away through a barren, dreary country. The sun's early promise had not been fulfilled and a gray, slaty day emphasized the dreariness of the landscape. To our right bleak mountains rose to meet a slaty sky — nowhere appeared tree or shrub, not even a fence broke the monotony of the landscape, never a house, not even a road, though occa-



THE CAMP OF SECTION THREE AT SAKULEVO IN THE SPRING OF 1917



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sionally a muddy track wandered aimlessly through the waste. We rounded the mountains and crossed a sluggish stream, the Galiko. Once we saw a village far away, its white minarets rising above the dull gray of the ensemble. Then the desolation closed down. Farther on, over a shaky wooden bridge, we crossed the Vardar, the Axis of Virgil. Hereabouts the country was flat and swampy, but suddenly it changed; scattered trees began to appear, here and there rocks jutted out. The trail began to mount and presently as we twisted our way through the first settlement, the village of Yenidze, mountains came into view to the northeast and then moved toward the south and west. About eleven we sighted some whitewashed houses clinging to the side of a cliff, the overflow of the town of Vodena through which we presently passed over a winding road of mountainous steepness; up we went, three hundred, four hundred metres, finally stopping where a fountain gushed from the roadside, a kilometre or so beyond the town.

We were in the heart of the hills now. On three sides of us the mountains rose to a height of six thousand feet or more. Their tops were covered with snow, and from this time on we were never to lose sight of it.

Some biscuits, ham, and chocolate found a good home and there was time for a couple of pipes before the whistle blew and we again cast off. And now our troubles began. Up to this time our way could at least lay claim to the name "road," but now even an attorney, working on a percentage basis, could establish no such identity for the straggling gully through which we struggled — sometimes a heap of boulders, sometimes a mire, but always it climbed. The cars coughed and grunted and often we were forced to halt while the motors cooled. In mid-afternoon the rain, which had been threatening for some hours, set in and the ground quickly assumed the consistency of sticky paste, through which we sloughed our way. About four we spoke the Lake of Ostrovo and shortly afterwards passed through the straggling village of the same name.

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Deep sand here made the going hard, but we soon left the shores of the lake and again headed straight into the mountains. So far as possible the trail held to the passes, but even so, the ascent was very great. As night fell we came to an especially steep stretch slanting up between snow-covered mountains. From a little distance it looked as though some one, tiring of road-building, had leaned the unfinished product up against a mountain-side. Time and again we charged, but without avail; no engine built could take that grade. Physics books tell us, "that which causes or tends to cause a body to pass from a state of rest to one of motion is known as Force." With twenty men to a car, pulling, pushing and dragging, we assumed the function of "force" and "caused a body"—the cars—to "pass from a state of rest to one of motion," hoisting them by main strength over the crest.

Night had shut down for some hours when the last car had topped the rise. A bone-chilling wind had swept down from the snow, the rain still fell. The lights were switched on, and over a trail, flanked on one side by a towering cliff and on the other by a black chasm of nothingness, we kept on. Once we rounded a sharp curve, there was a sudden dip in the trail and in the darkness we almost shot off into the space below.

It still lacked some two hours of midnight when ahead we discerned a few flickering lights. The Lieutenant gave the signal and we came to a stop at the fringe of a miserable village. We had been sixteen hours at the wheel but had covered no more than one hundred and fifty kilometres. We were all cold and hungry, but the soup battery was mired somewhere miles in the rear. Our lanterns showed us but a few stone hovels. Had we known more of the Balkans, we should not even have thought of finding a shop. We gave up thoughts of dinner, crawled within our cars, and, wrapping our great coats about us, sought to dream of "a cleaner, greener land."

The tramping of many feet and the sobbing of a man woke me next morning. I looked out to see a column of

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Russian infantry passing. One big fellow was crying as though his heart would break. Banica or Banitzia, the village at which we had halted, proved to be a miserable collection of huts, constructed of rounded stones, with which the surrounding hills were covered. Like most Turkish villages, it clung to the side of a hill, sprawling there with no attempt at system or a view to streets. The buildings were of one story; a few had glass, but in by far the most part straw was employed to block the windows. The twisting paths which wandered about between the houses were knee-deep in black mud. There were no shops, not even a café.

Other and higher hills rose above the one on which the village was situated. These hills were barren and covered with loose stones, their tops were crested with rough breastworks behind which were empty cartridge cases, torn clothing, ponchos, and scattered bodies in faded uniforms, for here the Bulgar and Serb had opposed each other. To the north of the village stood a few trees, and here within a barbed-wire corral a few armed Serbs guarded several hundred Bulgar prisoners. The villagers were as unattractive as their surroundings, the men dull, dirty-looking specimens, the women cleaner, but far from comely. The latter were dressed in skirts and blouses of many colors. Their heads were covered with shawls, the ends of which were wound about their necks. From beneath these straggled their hair, invariably woven into two plaits into which was interwoven hair from cow's tails dyed a bright orange. Upon their feet they wore wooden, heelless sandals which, when they walked, flapped about like shutters in a gale of wind. The little girls were miniature replicas of their mothers, save their faces were brighter — some almost pretty. They wore their many petticoats like their mothers, at mid-leg length, tiny head-shawls and striped wool stockings. The endless occupation, both of the women and children, was the carrying of water in clay jars. They must have been building a river somewhere and judging from the amount

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of water they were transporting, it was to be no small-sized stream either.

Not all of the cars had come through to Banitza and so we awaited their arrival. Several had broken axles and the big *atelier* car and the soup battery had mired in crossing the Ostrovo flats. Meanwhile, perched on the side of a hill with the snow above us and a falling temperature, we, of the advance squad, were reminded that winter was almost upon us. The days were gray, and as there was nothing to do while awaiting the stragglers, save gaze across the valley which stretched southward below us, the time dragged. The boom of heavy guns came to us from the northwest and occasionally, when the wind was right, we could hear the crackle of infantry fire. Some couriers riding back from the front brought word that Monastir had fallen after fierce fighting and the French were advancing northward.

By evening of the third day all the cars had come up, and, with the kitchen wagons once more in our midst, we were again able to have a hot meal. Our spirits rose, and that night, clustered round a small fire, we sang some mighty choruses. At nine on the morning of the 24th of November — a cold, drizzly morning — we wormed our way down through the village and out upon the transport road northeast toward the Serbian frontier. Though hundreds of German, Bulgar, and Turkish prisoners were at work upon the road, it was scarcely passable. Everywhere we passed mired couriers and *camions*; dead horses and abandoned wagons were scattered about. The way led across a level valley floor. On the flat, muddy plains bordering the road were camps of French, English, Italians, and Russians. Several aviator groups were squatted in the miry desolation.

As we advanced, the road accomplished something we had deemed impossible — it grew worse. The transport of five armies struggled along, or rather through it, and contributed everything from huge tractors to little spool-wheeled, cow-drawn Serbian carts. We passed through

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one squalid, war-festered village where the road reached the sublimity of awfulness and then about midday spoke the village of Sakulevo. Several demolished buildings, pocked walls, and shelled houses showed the place had been recently under fire. Passing through, we crossed a sluggish stream, from which the village takes its name, and on a shell-scarred flat on the north bank halted and pitched our tents.

### "VALLEYS DREADLY DESOLATE"

THE road at this point bends to the east before again turning northward, and enters the long valley at the farther end of which lies the city of Monastir. About a mile northward from our camp was a stone which marked the border between Macedonia and Serbia. High ranges of mountains stretched along the side of the lonesome valley. No words of mine can describe the landscape as do the words of Service:

"The lonely sunsets flare forlorn  
Down valleys dreadly desolate,  
The lordly mountains soar in scorn  
As still as death, as stern as fate."

"The lonely sunsets flame and die,  
The giant valleys gulp the night,  
The monster mountains scrape the sky  
Where eager stars are diamond bright."

### "WHERE THE BEST IS LIKE THE WORST"

WE had reached Sakulevo on the afternoon of the 24th of November. On the morning of the 25th we started to work. On the other side of the river was a cluster of tents. It was a field dressing-station and, appropriate to its name, was located in a muddy field. Since Sakulevo was at this time some thirty kilometres from the fighting, our work consisted of evacuations; that is, back of the line work, the most uninteresting an *ambulancier* is called upon to do, since it wholly lacks excitement. Here it was made more trying because of the fearful roads over which

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our route lay. At this time the village of Eksisu, some forty kilometres southeast of Sakulevo was railhead, and to this point we evacuated our wounded. It was a matter of three and a half hours of the most trying sort of driving. Perhaps a better idea of our work at Sakulevo may be had if we go together on a "run." It's seven-thirty in the morning, a cold raw morning with ice on the pools and a skim of ice on the inside of the tent. The sun has not long appeared over the snow-clad mountains and there is little warmth in its rays. We have just had breakfast — Heaven save the name! some black coffee and army bread — so it's time to be off. We crank-up — a none too easy performance, since the motors are as stiff with cold as we are — and then toss and bump our way across the little bridge disregarding a sign which, in five languages, bids us "go slowly." A couple of hundred metres farther on in a field at the left of the road is a group of tents, before which whips a sheet of canvas displaying a red cross. It is the field dressing-station. We turn the car, put on all power and plough through a mire, and then out upon more solid ground, stopping in front of the tents.

The tent flap opens and two *brancardiers* appear, bearing between them a stretcher upon which lies a limp figure covered with a dirty blanket. A gray-green sleeve dangles from the stretcher and shows your first passenger is a German. He is slid into place and by this time your second passenger is ready. He is a giant Senegalese with a punctured lung. Your third man is a *sous-officier* whose right leg has just been amputated. He has been given a shot of morphine and his eyes are glazed in stupor. The third stretcher is shot home, the tail-board put up, and the rear curtain clamped down. Over these roads we can take no more, so we are ready for the start.

Through the slough and then out upon the road, which is little more, we go. Through war's traffic we pick our way, beside shell-laden *camions*, pack-trains, carts, past stolid lines of Russians, dodging huge English lorries

## SECTION THREE

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whose crews of Tommies sing out a friendly "Are we down-hearted?" Between rows of Bulgar and Boche prisoners your way is made, the hooter sounding out its demand for the rights of a loaded ambulance. Along the roadside, out there in the fields, sprinkled everywhere, we see the little wooden crosses, war's aftermath. Everywhere war's material wastage is apparent. Wrecked wagons and motors, dead mules, hopelessly mired carts, military equipment, smashed helmets, dented *douilles*. Your way is lined with these. The road from there on becomes freer, but is still too rough to permit much quickening of speed. As we turn a bend, a frenzied Italian comes charging across the fields. He seems greatly excited about something and unwinds reels of vowels, not one word of which we understand. We try him in English and French, not one word of which he understands, so finally we give it up and go on, leaving him to his "*que dises.*"

Through two passes, in which the white, low-hanging clouds close down, through several deserted villages over a road which, save in the Balkans, would be considered impassable, we carry our load. It is impossible to prevent lurching, and the black within groans and cries aloud in his pain. The Boche, too, when there is an exceptionally bad bit, moans a little, but the *sous-officier* makes not a sound throughout the voyage. At one point the road passes near the railroad, and, dangling over a ravine, we can see the remains of a fine iron bridge dynamited during the great retreat. At last, rounding the jutting point of a hill, we see far below us the blue waters and barren shores of Lake Petersko. Squatted beside the lake is a little village, Sorovicevo. Railhead and our destination, the station of Eksisu, lies a mile or so to the west. Down the hill we brake our way, then over a kilometre of wave-like road into a slough, where for a time it seems we are destined to stick, and at last the tossed and moaning load is brought to a stop at the *hôpital d'évacuation*, a large cluster of tents. We assist in removing the wounded — the Senegalese is gray now, with the shadow of death

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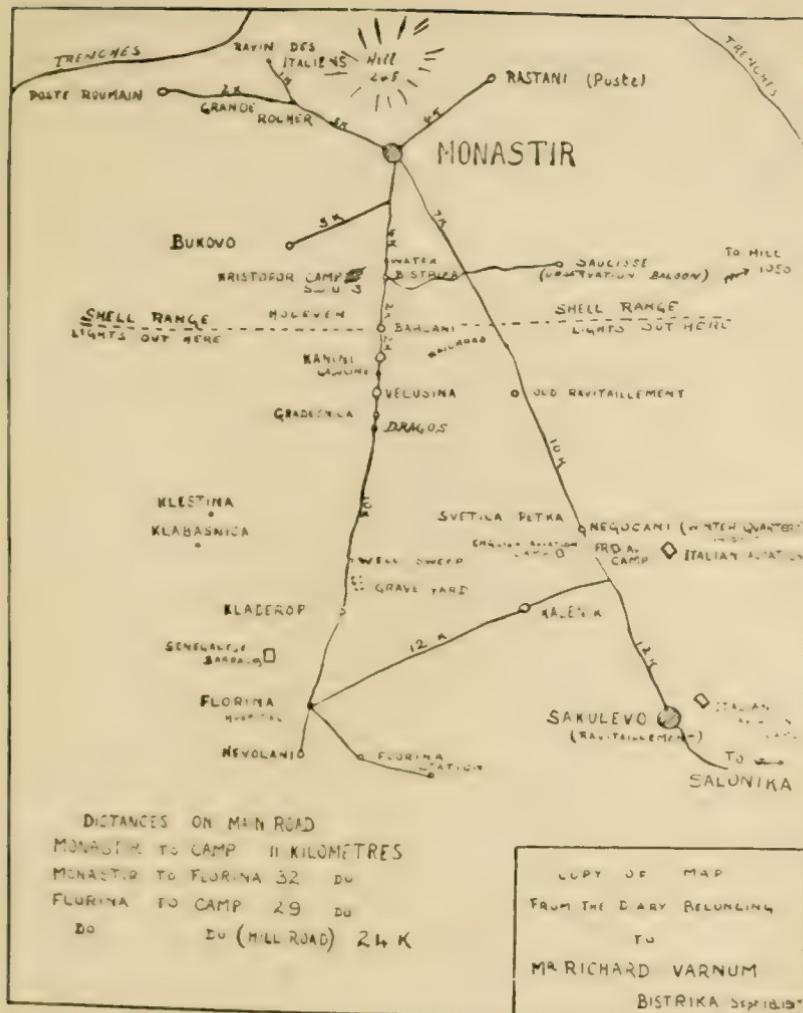
upon him, and his breath gushes with great sobs through his torn lung. The Frenchman and Boche seem to have come through all right.

It is now eleven-thirty o'clock, and we are probably becoming conscious that we could use a little food, but it will be at least two hours before we can reach camp, so we get out a spark-plug wrench and break up several army biscuits to munch on the way home. *En route* we are hailed by three Tommies who have been left behind and are seeking to join their detachment. They desire a lift, so we take them aboard and are repaid by hearing their whimsical comments on the "filthy country." It is nearly two o'clock — a blowout has delayed us — when we reach camp and the motor has barely stopped churning before we are in the mess-tent clamoring for our "dum-dums" — beans — and *singe*, tinned beef. You will find your appetite has not suffered because of the "run."

### TENTING IN SERBIA

THE days were rapidly growing colder. Our tents were sheathed with ice and the snow foot crept far down the mountains each night. We got our sheepskin coats and inserted an extra blanket in our sleeping-bags. Each night we drained our radiators to prevent damage from freezing. The few sweets we had brought with us had now given out. In the French army, save for a little sugar — very little — and occasionally — very occasionally — and a small amount of apple preserve, no sweets are issued. It was impossible to purchase any, so presently there set in that craving for sugar which was to stay with us through the long winter. The arrival of Thanksgiving, with its memories of the laden tables at home, did not help matters. Dinner consisted of lentils — my own particular aversion — boiled beef, bread, red wine, and black coffee. However, the day was made happy by the arrival of our first mail and we feasted on letters.

It's wonderful what a cheering effect the arrival of the



TYPE OF SKETCH MAP USED BY DRIVERS



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post had on us. Throughout the winter it was about our only comfort. In France it had been welcome, but down in the Orient we seemed so cut off from the world that letters were a luxury, the link with the outside. When they came, it did n't so much matter that a man was cold or hungry and caked with mud, that the quarters leaked and the snow drifted in on his blankets. The probability of its arrival was an unfailing source of pleasurable conjecture; its arrival the signal for whoops and yowls; its failure, the occasion for gloom and pessimism.

Some fifteen kilometres to the north and west of Sakulevo was the large town of Florina, the northern-most town of Macedonia. Here was located a large field hospital. At the hospital, for a time, we maintained a *poste* of two cars on five-day shifts.

### AT FLORINA

WE found Florina one of the most interesting towns in the Balkans. Long under the rule of the Turk, it possessed a distinctly Oriental aspect which gave it charm. It nestled at the foot of some high hills which had been the scene of heavy fighting in the dispute for its possession. The town itself had suffered little, if any, in the fighting. Its long main street followed a valley, turning and twisting. Booths and bazaars lined the thoroughfare and in places vines had been trained to cover it. There were innumerable tiny Turkish cafés, *yogart* shops, little shops where beaten copperware was hammered out, other booths where old men worked on wooden pack-saddles for burros. There were artisans in silver and vendors of goat's-wool rugs. The streets were always alive with "the passing show," for the normal population of fifteen thousand souls had been greatly augmented by the influx of refugees from Monastir. There was an air of unreality about the place, an indefinable theatricalism which gave one the sense of being part of a play, a character, and of expecting, on rounding a corner, to see an audience and then to hear the playing of the orchestra.

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It was while on duty at the hospital at Florina that I made the first run into Monastir. My journal for December 2 reads:

"At one o'clock this afternoon received orders to proceed to Monastir *en raison de service*. My passengers were two corporals. It has been a cold, overcast day, the clouds hanging low over the snow-capped mountains. A cold, penetrating wind hit us in the face as we drew away from the hospital.

"Where the Florina road joins the main caravan road to Monastir, we passed from Macedonia into Serbia. Here we turned sharply toward the north. The flat fields on either side were cut up with trenches, well made, deep ones, from which the enemy was driven less than a fortnight before, and shallow rifle pits which the French and Serbs had used in the advance. Even now, so soon after their evacuation, they were half filled with water. Everywhere there was evidence of big gun-fire and in one place where we crossed a bridge the ground for yards about was an uninterrupted series of craters. For the first time in the war I saw piles of enemy shells and shell cases showing that his retreat had been unpremeditated and hasty. In one place stood a dismantled field piece.

### NEGOCANI — MONASTIR

"ABOUT a quarter of an hour after leaving Florina, we reached the village of Negocani. There had been heavy fighting here and many of the houses had been reduced to piles of 'dobe' bricks. Two miles away on the road, we could discern the remains of another village, Kenali, where the enemy made his last stand before falling back upon Monastir the other day. The sound of the guns had all the while been growing louder, and not far beyond Negocani I caught my first glimpse of the minarets of Monastir. It had been two months since I was under fire and I had some curiosity as to how it would affect me. Before reaching the environs of the city, it became apparent that this curiosity would not long remain unsatis-

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fied, for ahead we could see the smoke and dust from bursting shells. Approaching the city, the way becomes a regular road, quite the best I have yet seen in the Balkans. I was speculating on this marvel when, perhaps five hundred yards ahead, a columnar mass of earth spouted into the air. The whirring of speeding *éclat* had scarcely ceased when another came in slightly nearer. The road was under fire and that same old prickly feeling shot up my spine, the same 'gone' sensation moved in and took possession of my insides. Suddenly the familiar sound pervaded the air. There was the crash as though of colliding trains and not forty metres away the earth by the roadside vomited into the air. In another second the *débris* and *éclat* rained all about us, showering the car. The shell was a good-sized one — at least a '150,' and we owed our lives to the fact that, striking in soft ground, the *éclat* did not radiate. Meanwhile, I had not waited for the freedom of the city to be presented. The machine was doing all that was in her, and in a few seconds more we shot by the outlying buildings. The fire zone seemed to be restricted to the entering road and the extreme fringe of the city, and when we reached the main street, though we could hear the shells passing over, none struck near. Within the city our batteries, planted all about, were in action and the whirring of our own shells was continuously sounding overhead.

"We parked in a filth-strewn little square lined with queer exotic buildings. While I waited for the corporals to perform their mission, I talked with an Algerian zouave who lounged in the doorway. He pointed out where a shell had struck this morning, killing three men, two civilians and a soldier. He further informed me that the streets of the city were in full view of the enemy, who occupied the hills just beyond its outskirts. This revelation was most disconcerting to me, for I had no desire to work up a 'firing acquaintance.' A number of officers of high rank passed — among them a three-star general. A colonel of infantry stopped, shook hands with me, and

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spoke appreciatively of the work of the Corps in France, saying he was glad to welcome a car in the Orient.

"By three o'clock we were ready. My passenger list was augmented by a lieutenant, *médecin*, who wished to reach Florina. He cautioned me with much earnestness to *allez vite* when we should reach this shelled zone, a caution wholly unnecessary, as I had every intention of going as fast as Providence and gasoline would let me. The firing now — praise to Allah — had slackened and only an occasional shell was coming in. So, making sure the engine was functioning properly, I tuned up, and a second later we were going down the road as though 'all hell and a policeman' were after us.

"We reached Florina without mishaps. To-night there is a full moon. Don and I strolled down into the town. It was singularly beautiful, the white minarets standing out against the sombre mountains, the silvery light flooding the deserted streets. We strayed into one of the tiny little cafés. It was a cosy place. Divans covered with rugs and sheepskins lined the walls. A few befezzed old men sat cross-legged on these — sat there silently smoking giant *hookahs* and sipping their syrupy coffee. We, too, ordered coffee, and then sat in the silence helping in the thinking. After a while the door opened and a short, hairy man entered. He was clad in long white wool drawers, around which below the knee were wound black thongs. On his feet were queer-shaped shoes which turned sharply up at the end and were adorned with black pompoms. He wore a short jacket embroidered with tape, and thrown back from his shoulders was a rough wool cape. Around his waist was wound a broad sash, into which was thrust a revolver and a long-bladed dirk. About his neck and across his breast were hung many silver chains, which jingled when he moved. His head was surmounted by a white brimless hat. He talked in an unknown tongue to the *patron*, and then, bowing low to us, was gone amid a clinking of metal. This strange-looking individual was — so we learned from the café's proprietor — an Albanian,

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a man learned in the ways of the mountains, a scout in the employ of the French.

"We sipped another coffee, smoked a cigarette, and then, bowing to the old men, went out into the moonlit street, leaving them to their meditations. As I write this from the tent, the sky is darkening, a chill wind sweeps down from the snow and gutters the candle. I am glad that our blankets are many."

As the days went by, our camp-site, where we were the first comers, began to assume the aspect of a boom mining town. Several *camion* sections appeared. Numerous *ravitaillement* groups moved in. Tents and nondescript structures of earth and ammunition boxes sprang up. Across the river ten thousand Russians were encamped, and all night their singing came to us beautifully across the water. All day and all night, war's traffic ground and creaked by us. The lines had shaken down; the two forces were now entrenched, facing each other just beyond Monastir, and the transport was accumulating munitions for an offensive. In the first camp opposite struggled long lines of Serbian carts — carts such as Adam used to bring the hay in. The sad-faced burros plodded by, loaded with everything from bread to bodies. Soldiers — French, Italian, Serb, and Russian — slogged by. But this activity was confined to the narrow zone of the roads. Beyond, the grim, desolate country preserved its lonesomeness and impressed upon the soul of man the bleakness and harshness of a land forlorn. For the most part the days were gray and sombre, with low-hanging clouds which frequently gave out rain and sleet and caused the river to rise so that more than once we were in danger of being flooded out. But occasionally there would be a clear morning, when the clouds were driven back and the rising sun would light the mountains, turning the snow to rose and orange. We were growing very tired of the evacuation work, of the long, weary runs. There was no excitement to tinge the monotony. We were becoming "fed

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up." The Squad, therefore, hailed with joy the news that the Section was to move up to Monastir and there take up the front-line work.

Though the exact date of our departure was not announced, we knew it would be soon and we commenced at once to make ready. Helmets once more became items of interest and motors were tested with an interest born of empirical knowledge that the fire zone was no place to make repairs. Everybody brightened up; interest and optimism pervaded the camp. And then the word came that we should leave on the 17th of December.

### MONASTIR

MEN stumbled about in the darkness falling over tent pegs or pulling at icy ropes. Now and then a motor in response to frantic cranking, coughed, sputtered and then "died." Down near the cook-tent some one was swearing earnestly and fervently at the mud. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the only light was that given off by the stars. The Squad was breaking camp, and we were to be in Monastir, twenty-five kilometres distant, before daybreak. Somehow, in spite of the darkness, the tents were struck and packed, and the cars rolled out on the bumpy roads.

With the assistance of our lights we were able to hold a good pace until we reached the dip in the road which had been designated as the point where the convoy should halt. Here we extinguished all our lights and made sure that everything was right. Ahead we could see flashes, but whether from our own guns or bursting shells we could not determine. The sound of firing came plainly to our ears. The cars now got away at fifteen seconds' intervals. A faint, gray light was showing in the east, just permitting a dim vision of the car ahead. At the entrance to the city, in a particularly exposed spot, there was some confusion while the leading machine circled about in an endeavor to pick the right street; then we were off again,

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heading for the northeast quarter of the city. Crossing a small, wall-confined stream by a fragile wooden bridge, we wound and twisted through a maze of crooked streets, and finally, just as the first glow lightened the minarets, came to a halt in a narrow street. Where my car stopped was a shattered house and the street was carpeted with débris, the freshness of which testified to the fact that the shells causing the damage must have come in not long before. Even as I clambered out of the machine, two shells crashed in somewhere over in another street.

Our cantonment consisted of two five-roomed, two-storied Turkish houses which stood within a small walled compound. The top floors, or attics, of these houses were free from partitions and gave just sufficient space for our beds, ranged around the walls. The place was clean and dry, and though, of course, there was no heat and no glass in the windows, it was infinitely better than the tents. The rooms below were used for the mess, the galley, and for the French staff, and one room which had windows and a stove was set aside for a lounge. The C.O. occupied a small stone building which formed part of the compound wall, a sort of porter's lodge. Beneath the houses were semi-cellars, and in one of these were stored the spare gas and oil. The cars were at first parked along a narrow, blind street which extended a short distance directly in front of quarters. As it was ascertained, however, that here they were in plain view of the enemy, they were moved back on another street and sheltered from sight by intervening buildings. The *atelier* was established in a half-demolished shed about two hundred yards up the street from the compound.

### A BIZARRE POSTE

OUR quarters were situated about midway between two mosques. In front of one of these mosques which faced on a tiny square hung a tattered Red Cross flag, betokening a field dressing-station. Here we got our wounded. The lines at this time were just beyond the outskirts of the

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city, and the wounded were brought directly from the trenches to this mosque, from whence it was our work to carry them back to the field hospitals out of range of the guns. I doubt if there ever was a more bizarre *poste* than this of the mosque. The trappings and gear of Mohammedanism remained intact. The muezzin's pulpit draped with its chain of wooden beads looked down on the wounded men lying on the straw-carpeted floor. On the walls, strange Turkish characters proclaimed the truths of the Koran. The little railed enclosure, wherein the faithful were wont to remove their sandals before treading the sacred ground, now served as a *bureau*. All was the same, save that now the walls echoed, not the muezzin's nasal chant, but the groans of wounded men who called not on Allah, but on God.

At first we found the twisted streets very confusing. They rarely held their direction for more than a hundred yards and their narrowness prevented any "observation for position." There seemed no names or identifications either for streets or quarters, and did one inquire the way of some befezzed old Turk, the reply would be "*Kim bilir Allah*" — Who knows? God. But gradually we grew to know these ways until on the darkest of nights we could make our way through the mazy blackness.

The city sprawled about on a more or less level plain at one end of the long valley which extended southward to the Macedonian frontier. Some of its houses straggled up the hills which rose immediately back of the city proper. Beyond these hills rose the mountains from which at a distance of two kilometres the enemy hurled down his hate. The normal population of Monastir was perhaps fifty thousand souls, a population of that bastard complexity found only in the Balkans. When we reached the city, a month after its capture and occupation by the French, something like forty thousand of this civilian population yet remained, the others having fled to Florina or gone even farther south. Conditions were still unsettled. Daily, spies were led out to be shot, and we were



A FEW MOMENTS AFTER A SHELL HAD KILLED THE LITTLE GIRL  
IN MONASTIR



Fiske

Baird

Magnum

Armour

ROAD-BUILDING BY MEMBERS OF SECTION THREE IN NEGOCANI



## SECTION THREE

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warned not to wander unarmed in the remote sections. Snipers, from the protection of covered houses, shot at passing soldiers and at night it was unsalubrious to go about. Lines were drawn about the town and none but military transport permitted to pass. Famine prices prevailed. In the bazaars, captured dogs were butchered and offered for sale. A few stores remained open. Above their doors were signs in the queer, jumpy characters of the Serbian alphabet, signs which it would take a piccolo artist to decipher. Within, matches were sold for half a *drachmi* (10 cents) a box, eggs, 7 *drachmi* a dozen, and sugar at 6 *drachmi* a kilo. All moneys, save Bulgar, were accepted; the *drachmi*, the *piastre*, the *franc*, the *lepta*, the *para*, but the exchange was as complicated as a machine gun, and no man not of the Tribe of Shylock could hope to solve its mysteries.

### THE GUNS THAT COMMAND MONASTIR

THOUGH most of the houses were closed and shuttered as protection against shell splinters, life seemed to go on much as usual. There was no traffic in the streets, save at night when the army transports came through, or when our machines went by with their loads, but the populace passed and repassed, bartered and ordered its life with the phlegmatic fatalism of the Easterner. The enemy from his point of vantage saw every move in the city. His guns commanded its every corner. His surveys gave him the range to an inch. Daily he raked it with shrapnel and pounded it with high-explosive. No man in Monastir, seeing the morning's sun, but knew that, ere it set, his own might sink. At any time of the day or night the screeching death might come, did come. Old men, old women, little children, were blown to bits, houses were demolished, and yet, because it was decreed by Allah, it was inexorable. The civil population went its way. Of course, when shells came in there was terror, panic, a wailing and gnashing of teeth, for not even the fatalism of Mohammed could be proof against such sights. And

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horrible sights these were. It was nothing to go through the streets after a bombardment and see mangled and torn bodies; a man with his head blown off; a little girl dead, her face staring upward, her body pierced by a dozen wounds; a group in grotesque attitudes, with, perhaps, an arm or a leg torn off and thrown fifty feet away. These in Monastir were daily sights.

One afternoon I remember as typical. It was within a few days of Christmas, though there was little of Yuletide in the atmosphere. At home, the cars were bearing the signs, "Do Your Christmas Shopping Early," but here in Monastir, where, as "Doc" says, "a chap was liable to start out full of peace and good will and come back full of shrapnel and shell splinters," there was little inducement to do Christmas shopping. Nevertheless, we started on one of those prowling strolls in which we both delighted. We rambled through the tangled streets, poked into various odd little shops in quest of the curious, dropped into a hot milk booth where we talked with some English-speaking Montenegrins, and then finally crossed one of the rickety wooden bridges which span the city's bisecting stream. By easy stages, stopping often to probe for curios, we reached the main street of the city. Here at a queer little bakery, where the proprietor shoved his products into a yawning stove-oven with a twelve-foot wooden shovel, we got, for an outrageous price, some sad little cakes. As we munched these, we stood on a corner and watched the scene about us. It was a fine day, the first sunny one we had experienced in a long time. Many people were in the streets, a crowd such as only war and the Orient could produce: a sprinkling of soldiers, mostly French, although occasionally a Russian or an Italian was noticed; a meditative old Turk, stolid Serbian women, little children — a lively, varied picture. Our cakes consumed, "Doc" and I crossed the street and, a short way along a transverse street, stopped to watch the bread line. There were possibly three hundred people, mostly women, gathered here waiting for the distribution of the farina

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issued by the military to the civil population. For a while we watched them, and then, as the street ahead looked as if it might yield something interesting in booths, we continued along it. In another fifty yards, however, its character changed; it became residential, and so we turned to retrace our steps. Fortunate for us it was that we made the decision. We had gone back perhaps a dekametre, when we heard the screech. We sprang to the left-hand wall and flattened ourselves against it as the crash came. It was a "155" H.E. Just beyond, at the point toward which we had been making our way, the whole street rose into the air. We sped around the corner to the main street. It was a mass of screaming, terror-stricken people. In quick succession three more shells came in, one knocking "Doc" off his feet with its concussion. The wall by which we had stood and an iron shutter close by were rent and torn with *éclats*. One of these shells had struck near the bread line. How many were killed I never knew. "Doc" for the moment had disappeared, and I was greatly worried until I saw him emerge from an archway. There was now a lull in the shelling. All our desire for wandering about the city had ceased. We started back toward quarters. Before we were halfway there, more shells came in, scattered about the city, though the region about the main street seemed to be suffering most. Crossing the stream, we saw the body of a man hanging half over the wall and near by, the shattered paving where the shell had struck.

In such an atmosphere we lived. Each day brought its messages of death. On December 19, I saw a spy taken out to be shot. On the 20th, a house next our quarters was hit. Two days later, when evacuating under shrapnel fire, I saw two men killed. Constantly we had to change our route through the city because of buildings blown into the street.

ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *Behind the Wheel of a War Ambulance*. Courtesy of Robert M. McBride & Company of New York.

## IV

### ALBANIAN POSTES

SOON after our arrival at Monastir, the Albanian work was also got under way and two cars were sent over there — one to Koritza, the other to Sulim, on the west shore of Lake Presba. They went over on December 30, crossing the pass with great difficulty. In the middle of January I got back from there with Fenton from a two-day rescue trip, one of the cars having a broken wheel. The *col* is so bad that we got over it in the supply car stripped of its body for the trip. If dry, the road is just possible; otherwise you are cut off. Hence the cars stayed over there. Supplies for the men had to be sent by ox or mule, a two days' journey; oil and gas going also by mule. It was very interesting over there, where nothing moved out of the villages without a military escort, and the fellows were all armed to the teeth.

Officers at Koritza did n't dare ride out of town except on the road toward Florina and then only for the first four or five kilometres, which were patrolled. No soldier went out in the street without a gun. They all said they were living, too, on a political volcano, and in fact, in the midst of it all, along in December, a Republic of Albania was founded! But to us it seemed all very quiet, with excellent cake-shops open. We slept in a hotel with an English-speaking proprietor where there were no fleas, and were shaved in the latest "scream" in American barber chairs, the barber having been ten years in New Haven. He installed this splendor on the main corner and, getting only three clients a day, declared the Albanians to be "a lot of cheap guys."

LOVERING HILL

## SECTION THREE

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### THE FIRST AUTO TRIP INTO ALBANIA

THIS is an account of the trip of the first auto into Albania.

At Florina, we loaded up with food, gas, and oil, enough for two days' continual travelling and started out with an *infirmier* to help take care of the *blessés* on the way back. We got over the Pisoderi grade this time without pushing, for I knew the grade better. From there on it was the most interesting trip I ever have made. For twenty kilometres we went along a valley and had to ford the river ten or eleven times. The people may have seen autos before, but they had n't seen them enough to satisfy their curiosity; so they would drop everything as they worked in near-by fields and rush to the road to watch us pass. When we got about twenty kilometres from the second *poste*, both man and beast were afraid of the machines. They would see us coming, and by the time we got to them they were well across a ditch, where I suppose they imagined they were safe. Even the old, sleepy oxen showed a lot of "pep" when we came along, and backed and twisted around so in their yokes that the drivers had a hard time untangling them.

At one village we were stopped by a doctor who said that a *blessé* was *en route* in a wagon that had been sent for him the night before. So we went on to meet him, but found that the wagon did not have the wounded man after all. We decided, therefore, to go on as long as the Ford would run, and soon crossed the line into Albania, passing through several towns that had been pretty well shot up by both the Bulgars and the Allies as the former retreated two months before.

The roads were almost impassable, as the old *brancardier* had told us would be the case, and nothing but a Ford could have got over them. At length we arrived at Koritza, our destination, and waited for the doctor to make inquiries. The surprise was on us when several Albanians speaking English crowded around the ma-

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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chines. They had been in Worcester, Massachusetts, and had accumulated a roll of bills large enough to retire on over here. You find a lot like that. Finally we found the *poste de secours*. Imagine our further surprise when the *blessé* greeted us in perfect English, saying, "I am glad you have come." When he heard we were Americans, he added: "So am I — an American volunteer, born and raised in New York City."

Eleven days before our arrival this poor devil had been shot four times, and after lying out in front of the trenches all day, he was picked up by *brancardiers* and brought down from the mountains on a mule. The lines were only fifteen kilometres away, but it took eleven hours to accomplish this. We carried him twenty-five kilometres that afternoon, and stopped all night in a little town.

We left Albania the following morning and crept back at a snail's pace — about ninety out of the hundred kilometres in low. On the way we picked up other *blessés*, less grave cases, and would take turns going ahead, with the grave case in the second machine. If the front car got an awful jolt, the second one would stop, while we took our American *blessé* out and ran the machine over the ditch or bump. Then we would put him back again, and go on.

We got to the second *poste* about noon, and had our Thanksgiving dinner of the supplies we had brought along. Probably it was the lightest turkey dinner either of us ever had, for it consisted of *singe*, or canned beef, biscuits, cooking-chocolate, and some wine. But it went down with much satisfaction.

We arrived at the Florina Hospital about five o'clock, and there received many congratulations from the *Médecin Chef* and several doctors, who thought we had done something wonderful, for it took a wagon train four days to make one way of this trip.

DONALD C. ARMOUR<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Evanston, Illinois; Yale, '17; entered the Field Service in April, 1916, and served in Sections Three and Eight; subsequently a Second Lieutenant, U.S. Field Artillery.

## SECTION THREE

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### ALBANIAN ADVENTURES

*January 1, 1917*

IT is now New Year's Day and I am more than a hundred kilometres from where I was when I first started this letter — away over two mountain ranges. I don't know when I shall get back to the Section, as I am now attached to a regiment of infantry. I have arranged to have oil, gas, and carbide sent to me by pack-mules, and I shall stay here probably until my car gives out. Then I shall have to go back on horseback — a four or five days' trip.

Talk about Richard Harding Davis or Anthony Hope adventure stories! If I were a writer I would beat any of theirs. For instance, I am now armed with a carbine, a revolver, and one hundred and twenty rounds of ammunition, to protect myself from brigands along the road. Can you imagine anything more dime-novelty? The Colonel of the regiment was quite upset when he found that I was not armed and immediately gave orders to arm me to the teeth.

Imbrie and Winant have gone off to find their Colonel and I stay here for another day or two before we all go to hunt up the regiment — over another mountain range. I understand it is an almost impossible route, over which no autos have ever gone before. In the meanwhile I am comfortably billeted here at the house of a man who lived for years in St. Louis and speaks English.

*Later*

I AM over another mountain range and "busted down." I am living in a little mountain village with the Colonel, who has just become a general, and his staff. Until I get some spare parts, which will probably be a week at least, I shall have to stay here, for I am about a hundred miles from anywhere.

For the first day the General did n't have any food with him, so I found a chicken and some beans and cooked them, thus managing to provide a pretty good dinner.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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The next day I walked over to my car and extricated the canned goods which I had in it, and we ate with relish. At last a limited amount of food arrived and we are fixed. The whole situation is really most amusing.

I am at the farthermost part of the lines, way up in the mountains between two lakes. The inhabitants of the country are wilder than the ancient American Indians and live in about the same way, although they have mud houses instead of tents. They speak a mixture of Greek, Albanian, and Serbian, which even the interpreter can't understand. The country is full of wolves which come down to the edge of town at night looking for stray dogs or donkeys. I saw two yesterday, but was too far away to get a shot.

J. MARQUAND WALKER<sup>1</sup>

### ON THE SERBIAN FRONTIER

*Negocani, January 3, 1917*

FOR over two weeks we have been up at the very front, but have now been ordered back a few kilometres to a village right on the frontier. We were very loath to go, but now that we are settled here, I think every one realizes that staying up there was an unnecessary risk to incur, for the daily, even hourly, bombardments from the enemy positions on the hills looking straight down into town had been getting more and more frequent and the inhabitants were either leaving or lying low in their cellars. Finally, a shell landed in a little courtyard, perhaps seventy yards away from us, and more or less damaged six of our cars. I had thirteen pieces in mine, damage done to two tires, a spoke and a radius rod, while a large hole was made in the crank case which necessitated taking down the entire motor. Roddy Montgomery, who was standing between two machines, perhaps five yards off, was knocked over

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '11; entered the Service in September, 1915, and later became a Section leader; received a commission in U.S. Artillery and was promoted to Captain. The above are extracts from home letters and letters addressed to the Paris Headquarters of the Field Service.



THE HILLSIDE ENCAMPMENT AT BISTRICA, MAY, 1917



## SECTION THREE

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and his car battered up; but he escaped unhurt. The worst feature was that a little girl of seven, who used to play around and talk to us while we were oiling and greasing, was literally blown to pieces and fragments of her burned flesh were spattered all over. Half of her head landed on the top of my car and had to be scraped off with *essence*. It was pretty sickening. After this, the *Divisionnaire* decided it was no use having the Section "shot up" little by little; so we moved our quarters. The work is still the same, however, as the cars go up from here at 6 A.M., and evacuate back to Florina, seventy kilometres in all, while some of us are even busier than before.

We are installed in a large mud farmhouse with a huge yard, a well, and half-dozen outbuildings, used as kitchen, dining-room, and *bureau*. This yard, when we came here, was two feet deep in straw, rubbish, and filth of all sorts, and it took two days of shovelling, burning, disinfecting, and whitewashing, to make it habitable; but we are now well installed. The village is deserted save for troops, so any one wanting firewood calmly attacks a house with a pick-axe, smashes the mud walls, and walks off with the beams, rafters, or anything else he fancies. It is very convenient, and avoids *paperasses*. All around us are the trenches and *boyaux* of the famous Kenali lines, from which the Bulgars were driven just before the capture of Monastir last month. Some of them are marvellously constructed, and collectors of ironware are revelling in souvenirs of all sorts — shells, fuses, grenades, bayonets, etc., most of which, however, I think will be found too heavy to lug around and will be discarded long before our return.

### A NEW REPUBLIC

JUST before going up from our first camp, I had a most interesting three days' trip into Albania, driving the *Médecin Chef* of the Q.G. and the *Médecin Chef* of Florina Hospital over to Koritza to see the Colonel in command of the troops in that region. Two cars started with us;

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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but after all hands had pushed at them valiantly for hours, they were obliged to turn back on the *col* of Pisoderi, thirteen kilometres straight uphill from Florina to the summit, 1650 metres high, whence you get a magnificent view over the entire valley of the Cerna. I had no particular trouble in Hill's little touring car, and we reached our destination late that night, after sixteen hours' steady driving over some of the worst roads possible to imagine. At one time we followed the bed of a river, going through it eleven times, and once just escaping trouble as the water drowned the carburetor twice. At Koritza we were royally welcomed, and, as my passengers treated me as a friend instead of a chauffeur, I was the Colonel's guest, dined and lunched with him and his *État-Major*, and was entertained by the younger officers.

The political situation is extremely interesting here. At the beginning of the war the Greeks overran this part of Albania, but made themselves most unpopular through unjust taxation. Last summer the Venizelos crowd expelled the royalist officials, but proved no better. As the Powers in 1912 pronounced Albania independent, but as the country has had no government since the Prince of Wied was "fired," some prominent citizens of Koritza, mostly retired *comitajés*, asked Colonel Ducoing's permission to proclaim a republic. He assented, the Greeks were driven out, and a new council was elected, or self-appointed, just before we arrived. The flag of the new republic, dark red with a strange-looking, black-winged creature on it, and having a tricolor ribbon around the staff, had just been hoisted on the town hall. The whole thing is more or less comic-opera stuff, but the inhabitants take themselves very seriously. Since then several other towns have joined the movement. Every one is armed and no one dares go more than a few kilometres from town, as the country swarms with *comitajés* and the Austrian posts are only a short distance away, ten or twelve kilometres, on a mountain range.

Our arrival caused immense excitement, as ours was

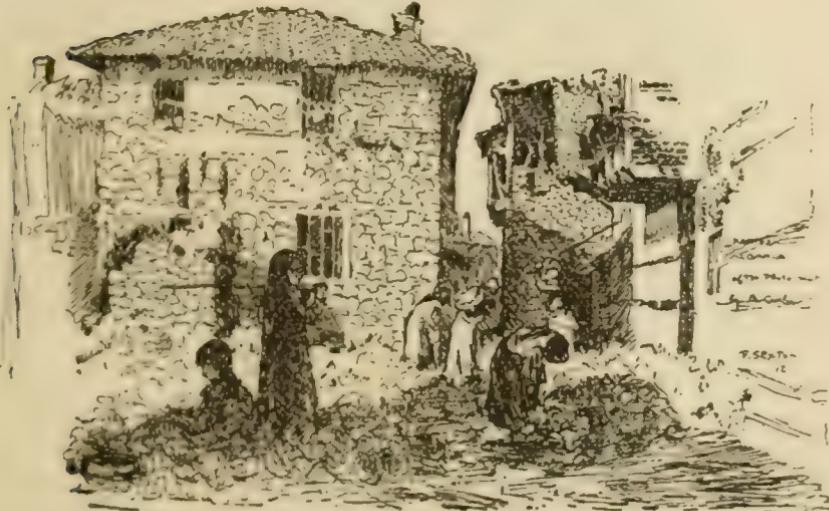
### SECTION THREE

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the second motor car ever seen in those parts, the first being Colonel Ducoing's, in which he arrived, but has not used since. Just lately two of our cars have climbed the pass and are now working over in Albania, one at Koritza, the other farther north near Lake Presba. Hill, with a mechanic, has just returned from a flying trip over there in order to repair an axle, and says the Lord only knows how they can ever get back, as the roads are getting worse every day. In a word, it is all very interesting here and I think we are being extremely useful.

JOHN MUNROE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '13; joined the Field Service on May 6, 1916, serving with Section Three; was *Sous-Chef* in Macedonia until May, 1917; entered the School at Fontainebleau and became a Second Lieutenant of Artillery in the French Army.



## V

### MONASTIR

THE work at Monastir, where we were finally stationed, went on all right. In this country you very rarely get up to *postes de secours*. We evacuated from a town two or three kilometres back, along a flat and on the whole a very good road, twenty-eight kilometres to a village where there was a relay, and where another section took the wounded farther to the rear. The work was very interesting, for it was done mostly over the territory conquered the previous November.

At Monastir we were quartered very comfortably in two good houses. But the resources of the town were somewhat limited and food prices very high; two chickens, for instance, costing 25 francs, and two eggs, 2 francs 20. Then, too, rifle bullets flew about certain of the out-lying quarters, "210's" wandered in occasionally, and a good deal of other Boche attention of less distressing variety was often our lot. We had to sneak in at night, in convoy, for the exit of the town was often pounded, and it was, perhaps, the best gauntlet-running ever seen — on a perfectly straight, open road with an excellent surface, and in the daytime absolutely free of traffic. So, on the whole, we were pretty well off at Monastir. But finally, in January, 1917, we were ordered to fall back, as the place got too lively for the cantonment of the Section, and we established ourselves fourteen kilometres in the rear, at Negocani, a mud village, the houses being of bricks, made of that material strengthened with manure and straw — the origin of reinforced concrete, probably.

The customs at Negocani were very curious. Take this one, for instance! If you were in need of firewood, you would look about until you found a house unoccupied by soldiers, which you then proceeded to demolish — a very easy task, as it is made of mud — in order to get

### SECTION THREE

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the beams; the floors and doors, in most cases, having all disappeared long before our coming. The absence from the village of all civilians rendered the proceeding all the easier. The day before we entered upon our first wood hunt, we found two houses which were still in fairly good condition, set our seal on them, and arranged matters with the *commandant d'armes*. But the next morning, when we arrived on the spot at eight o'clock, we found that all the doors and floors of one of them had been carried off by a flock of Italians who had reached town during the previous evening.

We were well off in our house, which was big enough for the men to sleep in. It had, on the first floor upstairs, two rooms which were separated by a hallway. I had a room on the ground floor, which was literally right on the ground. The French contingent of our party occupied the other ground-floor room, while the downstairs hall, which was provided with a fireplace, served at night as a sitting-room. An outhouse, with smoky rafters, to which, in a few minutes, with the aid of a pick, we added windows, completed our quarters.

This place was not as interesting as Monastir, but much safer, for at the latter town we were very much cooped up, having to stay within the city limits all the time, as everything outside of the walls was in plain sight of the enemy and some of the outlets were within rifle range. Moreover, there were quite frequent shellings of Monastir so that staying indoors was much to be encouraged. For instance, one shell landed in a little court where some of our cars were parked, got four of them and a poor child who was blown to atoms and parts of whose body were found in and on half a dozen cars. On this occasion my car, unfortunately, was about the heaviest sufferer — one front wheel, radiator, and water-inlet connection being shot through and through, while the headlight and quite a lot of wiring were cut up. But worst of all, the windshield and top were ruined and a horrible piece of the little child wound round and round the steering-wheel.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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This affair was nothing but a *coup court*; but still the Germans were shelling objectives that were close enough for pieces of shell to fall about us very freely, and, though we knew we were backing out, it was not till we got to Negocani that we felt how glad we were to be out of Monastir, especially as later the entrance to this last town got shelled daily and on this account we had to change the hours of evacuation.

### LOVERING HILL.

#### A GAS ATTACK ON MONASTIR

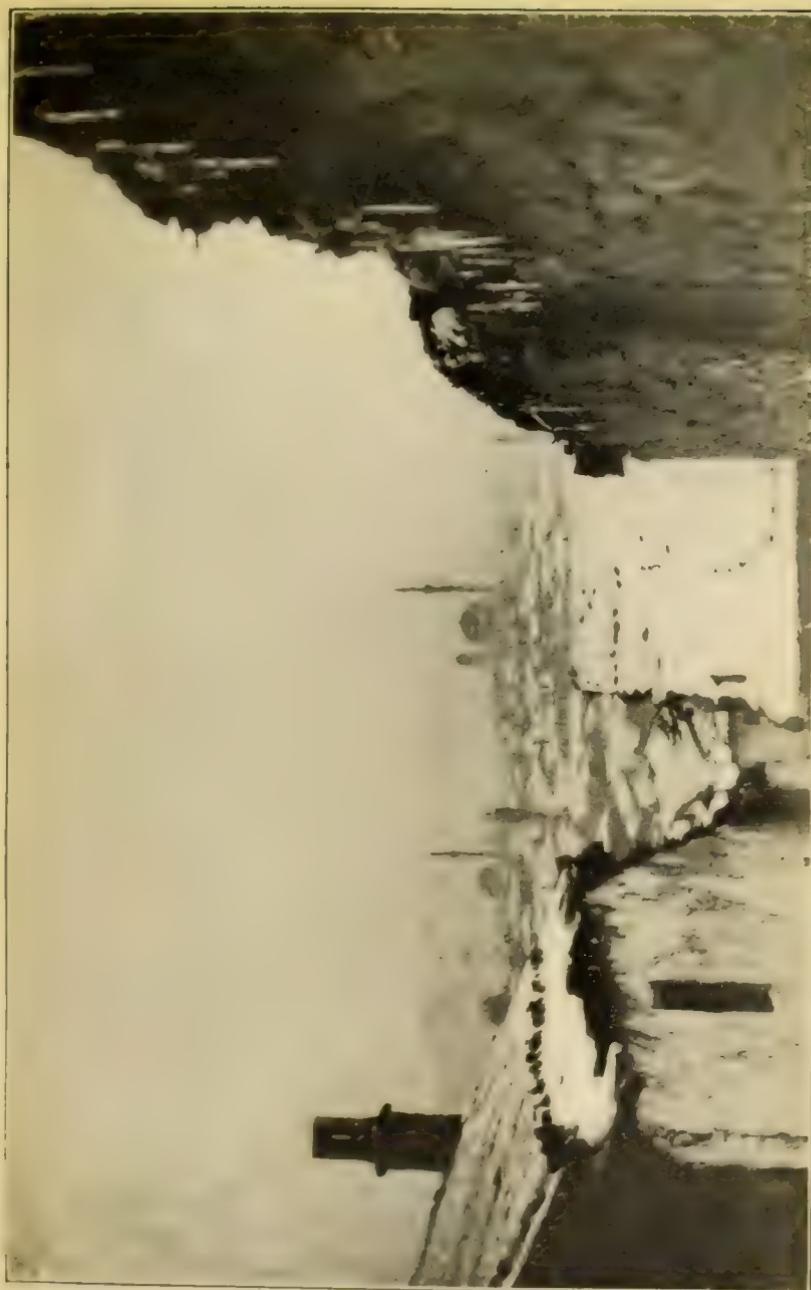
*Monastir, January 5*

WE have just had a gas attack here.

We sat there in my car after our lucky and narrow squeak with exploding shells, conversing with each other and with passing *poilus*. Everything was quiet, and we started to fix ourselves for the night. The straw inside the old Turkish mosque, as we learned from previous experience, was entirely too full of life for comfortable slumber; so we fixed a couple of stretchers out in the front worshiping hall, where air was better, too.

The shelling had recommenced by the time we tried to sleep. Suddenly the *obus* began to come in faster and faster, their whistles blending one into another until it was all one solid roar and whiz. The explosions sounded like shrapnel, and it was not until a shell broke our window that we learned it was gas. Our masks were out in the cars, and as we ran out to get them we almost suffocated, although we tried to hold our breath. Back in the mosque it was better, as the air was nearly untainted, the windows being air-tight. Fortunately the dozen *malades* and stretcher-bearers in the mosque were all provided with masks, so in less uncomfortable state of mind, we sat down to wait. There was nothing else to do, of course. All this time the shells were coming in at a fearful rate, all of them landing right in our quarter. Now and then a man would stumble in from the street, choking from the gas and calling for a mask. Pretty soon

MONASTIR IN WINTER  
VIEW FROM AN UPPER WINDOW OF THE CANTONMENT





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the doctor appeared in his stocking feet, and he took care as best he could of the asphyxiated.

In the meanwhile things were steadily becoming worse and worse. The streets were a cloud of gas, and inside the mosque it was getting more and more difficult to breathe, when suddenly, as I was standing by the door talking with Petitjean, there came a deafening explosion, which blew down the door and a solid wave of gas caught us in the face. For a moment there was complete confusion, men running every which way and some lying down gasping, coughing, and calling for masks. How they lost them is incomprehensible, for almost every one had a mask on when the shell came. The doctor, who was standing beside me, had his mask off for the moment and got it tangled up in trying to put it on again; but fortunately he was saved by the sergeant-major, who clapped it on the doctor's face. But he was sick for several hours afterwards. At the same time we picked up some masks and put them on the choking men who were lying about. Then the room was plunged in darkness. At this moment, I heard Petitjean calling for another *infirmier* to bandage him up. The doctor was out of commission, the *infirmier* unfindable, and I came to the rescue, finding Petitjean in the little room in back. His hand was bleeding badly; but I did my best to fix him up; rather a difficult job, however, because, with the gas-mask on, I could hardly see what I was doing. But I did the best I could under the circumstances. First I poured some alcohol over the hand, and found that the wound was not so serious as I at first thought. But it was painful and bleeding enough. Then, to make sure, I used peroxide which I sponged off with cotton and put on some iodine, bandaging the hand up as tightly as I could in order to stop the flow of blood — an effective dressing, even if it was not very scientific.

But before I had finished with Petitjean, I was told that another man had been completely knocked out by the gas, and that the only way to save him was to rush him over to the hospital in hope of finding some oxygen.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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This I immediately decided to do. There was still a lot of gas on the street; but I had to take my mask off to drive. I finally got the *asphyxié* over to the hospital; but no doctor was to be found, there was no oxygen, and everything seemed hopeless. So, as a last resort, I tried artificial breathing; but the poor fellow died while I was working on him, and I had to take his body back to the mosque, where, in the meanwhile, a gas shell had come in through the outer door and exploded in the anteroom, not ten feet from where John and I made our beds earlier in the evening; and when we collected our bedclothes next morning, they were covered with *débris* and saturated with gas. At this point a slight breeze sprang up, which made breathing possible again; the doctor came to, and though awfully sick, stuck to his job, thereby saving the lives of several men, while I spent most of the time making coffee over an alcohol lamp, coffee being a great relief to men who have been gassed. All this happened with bewildering rapidity in less time than one takes to write about it.

John was great. While I was fixing up Petitjean, he got his lantern and quieted the men, who were mostly intoxicated by the gas, and did not know what they were doing. His chief work was to make them keep their gas-masks on, which saved more than one of them. Altogether the shelling lasted about three hours, during which time thousands of these gas *obus* came in, with the result that two hundred civilians were killed and many left dying. Few soldiers lost their lives, thanks to the gas-masks.

John and I did not begin to feel the effects of the gas until the next day, and then were uncomfortably sick. It takes a long while to get the gas out of one's system, and the continual smell and taste of the stuff is sickening for days. My clothes and blankets still smell of it, though they have been out in the breeze for forty-eight hours. After this I will take high-explosive shells with all their *éclats* in preference to gas.

J. MARQUAND WALKER

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### OUR SECTOR EXTENDED

TOWARD the end of January we took over another segment of the line, a section southeast of Monastir, collecting our *blessés* from a village called Skocivir, situated on the banks of the Cerna, some twenty-five kilometres from Negocani. Skocivir was the highest point reached by wheeled transport, though some fifteen kilometres back from the line. From here munitions and *ravitaillement* were carried into the mountains on muleback, the wounded coming out by the same torturing transport. A few kilometres before reaching Skocivir we passed through the town of Brod, the first Serbian town retaken by the Allies after the great retreat of 1915, the point at which the Serbs first reentered their country. Here the Cerna was crossed by two bridges. Through the pass beyond poured French, Serbs, and Italians to reach their allotted segment of line. The congestion and babble at this point was terrific.

We saw much of the Italians. Long lines of their troops were constantly marching forward, little men with ill-formed packs. As soldiers they did not impress us, but they had a splendid motor transport — big, powerful cars well adapted to the Balkan mud and handled by the most reckless and skilful drivers in the Allied armies. The men were a vivacious lot and often sang as they marched.

### "AN ARMY OF OLD MEN"

In marked contrast were the Serbs, "the poor relations of the Allies." For the most part they were middle-aged men, clad in nondescript uniforms and with varied equipment. They slogged by silently — almost mournfully. I never saw one laugh, and they smiled but rarely. They were unobtrusive, almost unnoticed; yet when a car was mired, they were always the first to help, and withal they were invested with a quiet dignity which seemed to set them apart. I never talked with a soldier of any

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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army who had seen them in action but who praised their prowess.

The going, or rather ploughing, beyond Brod was particularly atrocious, and it frequently took from two and a half to three hours to cover the fifteen kilometres. At one point the way was divided by two lonely graves which lay squarely in the middle of the road, the traffic of war passing and repassing on either side. Brod service was particularly uninteresting, as the point at which we collected our *blessés* was too far back of the line to offer the excitement afforded by being under fire, save when there was an air raid. Then, too, the roads were so congested and in such terrible condition that the driving was of the most trying sort, and it frequently meant all day evacuation without one hot meal. Our work at this time was particularly heavy; we were serving three divisions, the one back of Monastir, the Brod division, and the division in Albania. In short, we were covering the work of three motor Sections.

During all these days the enemy continued to rain his fire upon Monastir. Gradually, but none the less surely, the city was withering away. Here a house, there a shop or bazaar, became a mass of *débris*. Huge holes gaped in the streets; tangled wire swung mournfully in the wind; once I saw a minaret fairly struck, totter a second, and then pitch into the street, transferred in a twinkling from a graceful spire into a heap of brick and mortar, overhung by a shroud of dust. Though perhaps half of the city's forty thousand inhabitants had fled as best they might, as many more remained. Generally they stayed indoors, though the flimsy walls offered little protection and there were no cellars. When they emerged, it was to slink along in the shadows of the walls. Scuttling, rather than walking, they made their way, every sense tensed in anticipation of the coming of "the death that screams." If Verdun had seemed the City of the Dead, Monastir was the Place of Souls Condemned to Wander in the Twilight of Purgatory. The fate of the *population civile* was a pitiable one.

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In a world of war, they had no status. Food, save the farina issued by the military, was unobtainable, and fuel equally wanting. Scores were killed. As for the wounded, their situation was terrible. Drugs were too precious, bandages too valuable, and surgeons' time too well occupied for their treatment. Their case would have been without hope had it not been for a neutral, non-military organization of the Dutch which maintained in Monastir a small hospital for the treatment of civilians. This hospital, established in a school, did splendid work, and its staff are entitled to high praise and credit.

For this hospital, one morning, I got the strangest load my ambulance ever carried — four little girls. As I lifted their stretchers into the car, their weights seemed as nothing. Three were *couchés*; the fourth, a bright little thing, wounded in the head by H.E. *éclat*, sat by my side on the driving seat and chatted with me in quaint French all the way to the hospital.

Meanwhile the days grew perceptibly longer and the sun, when it appeared, had a feeble warmth. A new Section coming out from France relieved our cars in Albania, and Giles and the others coming back from Koritza reported that the city was under frequent plane bombardment and the population demoralized.

For some time the talk of an attack on Hill 248 and the line back of Monastir had been growing. There seemed little doubt now that such an attack would shortly be launched with the object of driving the enemy back and freeing the city from artillery fire. Daily our fire grew more intense. The roads were congested with upcoming troops and new batteries going into position. Word came in that the Section was to hold itself in readiness to shift quarters to Monastir. Then, at last, one night came the order to report for action in the city.

ROBERT WHITNEY IMBRIE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *Behind the Wheel of a War Ambulance*. Courtesy of Robert M. McBride & Company of New York.

## VI

### THE SECTION GOES TO GREECE

SECTION THREE was relieved from the Monastir sector May 26, 1917, and moved to Florina about twenty kilometres back. Here orders were received attaching the Section to the French Provisional Division which was moving into Greece to settle once and for all the ever-present Greek threat at the Allied lines of communication in Macedonia.

We started to join the Division on May 31, going that day as far as the English hospital for Serbs at Vertekop, *via* the main road from Monastir to Salonica. The first village passed through was the hillside town of Banica; thence up over a pass by the battle-field of Gornitchevo, where the Serbians and Bulgars fought in October, 1916; on to Ostrovo (at the northern end of the lake of the same name) and Vodena. From there on to Vertekop it was easy rolling, mostly downhill.

On June 1 we rolled to Topsin, passing through the ancient town of Yenidze Vardar. At Topsin we went into a cantonment near the training-camp of the recruits for the new army of Venizelos. Our camp was the most inhospitable-appearing affair, situated as it was in the midst of a broad, barren, sandy stretch of homeless land which offered neither shelter from the June sun nor anything else. Here the rumor got out through the usual medium that we would remain several weeks and then be attached to the new Greek Army. But the rumor proved baseless when Lieutenant Dérude returned from Salonica (which was only about seventeen miles away) with orders to move "on to Athens" early the next morning.

The next day we rolled by noon to a town called Gida, and after a long halt on the hot, dusty road outside the town, we headed for Katerini. Arriving there in the early

## SECTION THREE

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evening, after having skirted the seacoast for many kilometres, we drew up in the yard of an old monastery. Here we were billeted for over a week, during which period and much to the regret of all, Charley Fiske<sup>1</sup> and R. B. Montgomery, their time having long since expired, returned to France. Their places were taken by John d'Este (who later became Chief of Section after the Section returned to Monastir) and James Keogh.

There were French troops in reserve at Katerini, the temporary front line being out in the direction of Elasson, which was southeasterly beyond the wooded hills back of Mount Olympus.

Our stay here was well taken up with washing *voitures*, changing wooden bodies for lighter canvas ones, and making other preparations for a campaign around the interior of Greece. Frequent trips were made to the sea at Scala Katerini, distant about seven kilometres. Here the swimming was excellent, and the sea-food dinners were "elegant."

The country between Katerini and Larissa, which is the chief city of Thessaly, was reputed to be filled with roving royalist *comitajés* who were the heroes of many a rumored skirmish with French outposts. So the *ambulanciers* were armed — hardly to the teeth — with automatic .32 calibre pistols. To be sure that every one got acquainted with this weapon of emergency, we had target practice out in the field back of the monastery. After twenty-five of us had fired one round per person, one hole (maybe two) appeared on the target. Whatever the number of hits, it was assured that every one knew his weapon and an attack on an ambulance section convoy (complete, with one White truck and a trailer-kitchen which served as a kennel for "Salonique," the cook's dog) was not to be feared (by the *comitajés*).

<sup>1</sup> Charles Henry Fiske, 3d, of Boston, Massachusetts; Harvard, '19; served in Section Three of the Field Service from August, 1916, to June, 1917; became a Second Lieutenant in the United States Infantry and died of wounds received in action August 24, 1918.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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As a further assurance against a surprise attack, each person was given seven rounds of ammunition, which was to be strictly accounted for and returned to Hill on making the next *étape*.

On or about June 12, 1917, we moved on to Larissa, passing up the heavily wooded slopes back of Mount Olympus, following the valley of the Mavroneri River. Near the crest of the divide, the village of Petra was passed, and from there on it was nice rolling down to the town of Elasson.

After making Elasson, we caught up with the main body of the Division which was strung all along the road, winding up the Maluna Pass—the entrance to Thessaly. We passed the little Indo-Chinamen who were struggling up the steep mountain with their huge packs and little peaked sun hats; Senegalese, *spahis*, *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, French Artillery, and lots of French infantry. The English troops involved in the affair went by sea, so we did not come in contact with them. Russia also contributed troops, but they came after things were settled.

Passing down the Thessalian slope from the Maluna Pass, the holiday-decked town of Tirnavos was reached during a heavy rain. Allied flags were flying, though drenched; and bunting of all colors showed signs of not being weather-proof. Hastily prepared pictures of General Sarrail, President Wilson, General Joffre, and others of note were hung from wires stretched across the streets and in the windows. The pictures looked as though several days before they had been likenesses of other persons and had been touched up in a hurry to show how loyal Thessalians were to the Allied cause. These same unique bits of portraiture appeared later at Larissa and Volo.

From Tirnavos it was a short run across the wheat-fields which stretched for many kilometres each side of the road to Larissa. We reached this town around five or six o'clock in the evening. There were crowds of citizens in the streets and all were looking in wonderment at the composite make-up of the incoming troops. The *spahis*

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had not long since rounded up the treacherous *evzones* (Greek infantry) who, after a formal surrender, offered resistance to the advancing French troops and then fled out across the wheatfields. The *Spahis* charged across the country and after a brief skirmish brought in a goodly number of prisoners, not, however, without losing twelve killed, officers and men.

We occupied the recently evacuated Greek barracks, and they were all too recently vacated, which we found much to our discomfort. Our barrack was near the one in which the captured Greeks were imprisoned.

Every now and then the Chinese guards would walk out a group of prisoners, who, upon being addressed by the French commander through an interpreter, would give three cheers for Venizelos and the Allies, and at the same time sign up in Venizelos's Army. Thereupon they would be marched to the station by the ever-vigilant Chinamen and shipped to Salonica and I hope to Topsin. Thus we saw loyal royal Greek troops transformed by a few well-chosen remarks into loyal Allied soldiers.

After the Greek King had acceded to the Allies' demands, on or about June 13, it became a certainty that there would be no active campaign in Greece, so it was a question of time, as to how long it was necessary to keep troops on the ground after the abdication. Several cars rolled each day, carrying only a few sick soldiers, and it is doubtful if we carried more than fifty during the expedition. Before we quitted Larissa, leaves were granted to Volo, which had been a base of supply for German submarines, where the most remarkable feature was the abundance of outdoor moving-picture shows. These shows were given on the *quai* from dark till dawn. Some of the Section made excursions to the Vale of Tempe which is not far from Larissa.

By the end of June most of the troops had evacuated Thessaly and we started back to Macedonia July 1. On this return hike we went over the Sarantoporen Pass to Kozano; thence, after a night on a barren hillside where

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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the tinkle of goat-bells assumed the sonority of fire alarms, we proceeded through Eksisu and Sakulevo to our new sector beyond Brod (which is east across the valley from Monastir). The Section now became attached to the Serbian Army and had for cantonment a clump of tents on the hill above Skocivir looking down the valley across the Cerna.

CHARLES BAIRD, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences based on an unpublished diary.



## VII

### THE BOMBARDMENT OF MONASTIR, 1917

*Monastir, August 17, 1917*

ALONG in the afternoon the intermittent bombardment of Monastir, which had been going on all the morning, suddenly increased in volume, until at four o'clock the noise of the bursting shells became a continual rumble, and tongues of flame mingled with the smoke and dust clouds which continuously shot up over the house-tops of the city.

The greater part of the Section was grouped on a hill-side near camp, whence we could watch the bombardment. Two of our cars were on duty in the city, but we had no news of them. Immediately after dinner, Tracy and I, having been assigned to twenty-four hours' duty in Monastir, left camp. The bombardment seemed to increase in violence as we approached the unfortunate city, and fire was sweeping the eastern quarter. As we drove up the Grande Rue, which practically cuts the city in half, we could see that the eastern part of the town had suffered most.

In the Grande Rue the confusion was indescribable. Women with babies in their arms and with little children clinging to their skirts, and men carrying grotesque burdens of household possessions hastily salvaged, ran hither and thither in an agony of terror. Others cowered in their doorways, fearful of the open, while several knelt directly in our path, beseeching us to take them to a place of safety. Men even jumped upon the steps of the ambulances from which we forcibly dislodged them.

Arriving at the hospital we found it undamaged, being well to the north of the city, and nearer the Bulgar and Boche positions. There we relieved Sinclair and Russell, who then left for Florina with wounded, and being the last to leave, were forced to quit the town by a circuitous

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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route through the western section, as shells were again falling in the Grande Rue.

Tracy and I were at once despatched to the offices of the hospital, which were located a little to the east of the Grande Rue. We found the building intact, though surrounded by flames. Tracy took the books and records in his car, while I went to the other end of the city to the English hospital for civilian Serbs, accompanied by an old Serbian woman, who had had her leg blown off. I found the Grande Rue still passable, though some of the buildings lining it were in flames. Shells were now falling to the west of the street.

Having delivered my wounded, I returned to the *G.B.D.* Hospital, where Tracy was preparing to make another trip to the offices. He left a little later, brought back the last of the salvage from that building, and reported that the fire was gaining headway in the Grande Rue, which he thought was impassable because of fallen débris. This was not the case, however, as Grenville Keogh, who had been sent for to help handle the emergency calls, came through it soon afterward, though his celluloid goggles were ignited by a burning fragment of wood, and one of his eyebrows went with them as they fizzled up in smoke.

As no more calls came, we remained at the hospital, and at eight o'clock the firing dropped to an intermittent cannonade. This continued until midnight, when we found that east of the Grande Rue, the city was practically destroyed. Incendiary bombs as well as high-explosive had been used, and fire and shell had done their work thoroughly. The French military authorities estimated that two thousand shells had fallen between four and eight o'clock that evening.

CHARLES AMSDEN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Farmington, New Mexico; Harvard, '19; served with Section Three from April to October, 1917; subsequently a Lieutenant in the U.S. Air Service.

THE BURNING OF MONASTIR, AUGUST 1, 1917





## VIII

### LAST DAYS OF SECTION THREE IN THE ORIENT

ON September 2 it was reported that the Italians, operating just across the valley on our right, had taken Hill 1050 and that the Senegalese were attacking on the plain at the foot of Rostanni. About noon we were warned of a coming counter-attack and told to be ready to evacuate from two new *postes*. Accordingly, that evening, the two staff cars, each with four ambulance drivers, made a tour of the *postes*, so that at least some of the boys might be familiar with all the roads.

At seven the following evening the repair car and ten ambulances started for the *G.B.D.* in Monastir, Lieutenant Déröde and I immediately following with the staff car. On arriving, we designated four men for the Ravine d'Italiennes, a *poste* of the 76th Division; four for the Roumanian *poste* of the 30th Division, and leaving two at the *G.B.D.* to see to the unloading of the cars there, and the evacuation back to Holeven and Florina if necessary.

At eight o'clock it was sufficiently dark to start, and the cars left for the *postes*. At the Ravine d'Italianne, we parked the cars in the lee of a stone bridge and were joined by three *brancardiers*.

Brush fires, started by exploding shells, blazed on the mountains on either side, and farther up the valley the fields were afire just behind the Bulgar front lines. All the French artillery, from the little mountain batteries up in the hills to the big "210's" in the outskirts of Monastir were pounding away, and the Bulgars were replying, though to a less extent, and apparently directing their fire down into the town. The heavens seemed a writhing, shrieking waste of sound, but all of a sudden, about nine o'clock, the firing ceased, emphasizing the deep stillness of the night, broken only by occasional rifle-fire and the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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sharp rat-ta-tat-tat of the *mitrailleuses* out ahead. Then the moon came up over the mountains, bathing everything in a soft white light, and for the moment making us and our cars seem frightfully conspicuous.

In a few moments Lieutenant Dérôde appeared for a final inspection and to warn the boys under no circumstances to bring in *cadavres*. About quarter of ten the cars began to roll steadily, and as they returned, after evacuating their loads at the *G.B.D.*, were directed, according to the last reports of the number of *blessés*, to one *poste* or another. Along toward 2.30 A.M. things commenced to slacken, and all cars but three, one at each *poste*, and one at the road junction, ready to move up, were sent in. All three came in before daybreak. At the *G.B.D.* the *Médecin Divisionnaire* instructed us that the hospital must be evacuated before evening, so we telephoned to the *cantonnement* at Bistrica and got all remaining cars rolling. By noon our work was pretty well cleaned up.

This was the last real activity of Section Three. From then on we kept our usual programme; two cars at the *G.B.D.* in Monastir to answer calls from the *postes*, and each morning the required number of cars to evacuate back to Holeven, Velusini, or Florina and occasional calls from a radius of thirty kilometres. On September 6 and 28 we received two new batches of men as replacements, a number of the old members returning to France. We kept busy building mud and stone houses for winter quarters, improving our road out as far as the main road, and giving all the ambulances a thorough overhauling. On October 8 we got news from the Parc d'Autos at Salonica that we were to be recalled, and on the 9th came fifteen French drivers, whom we were to break in on our Fords and work. As soon as they took over the service we prepared to leave.

At noon on the 16th, Lieutenant Dérôde called the whole Section together, and in a few words of heartfelt thanks, and regret at parting, bade us good-bye; and

### SECTION THREE

read the following order from the General Commanding the 76th Division, to which the Section had been attached:

Au moment où les conducteurs américains de la Section Sanitaire A.U. 3 vont quitter l'Orient pour aller continuer leurs services sur le sol français, le Général Commandant l'Armée Française d'Orient adresse ses félicitations au Chef et aux hommes composant le personnel de cette Section, pour l'intrépidité, l'entrain et le dévouement dont chacun d'eux a donné le plus beau témoignage au cours des opérations de guerre qui se sont succédé depuis Décembre 1916 dans le secteur de Monastir.

Grâce aux qualités d'endurance, de bravoure et de sang-froid dont ce personnel a fait preuve dans maintes circonstances, de nombreux soldats français, souvent grièvement blessés, ont pu recevoir rapidement les soins nécessaires qui leur ont sauvé la vie.

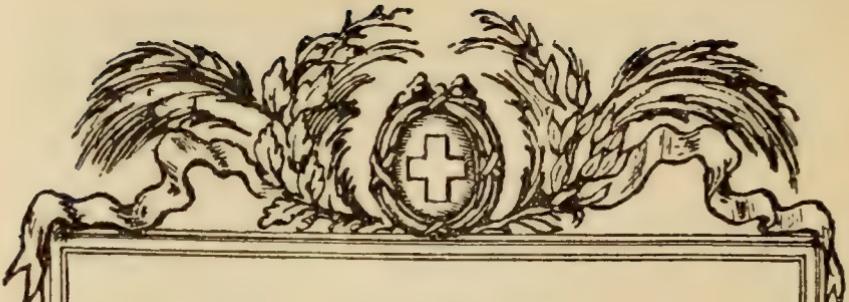
En s'éloignant de la Macédoine, où les volontaires américains ont fait apprécier leur concours si précieux, ces vaillant auxiliaires emportent avec eux les regrets unanimes, la gratitude de tous nos blessés et la reconnaissance de l'Armée Française d'Orient.

*Signé: REGNAULT*

JOHN N. D'ESTE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Salem, Massachusetts; Harvard, '10; joined the Field Service in September, 1916; served in Section Eight and as *Chef* of Section Three until November, 1917; subsequently a Second Lieutenant in U.S. Artillery.





## IN MEMORIAM

ARTHUR BLUETHENTHAL  
COLEMAN TILESTON CLARK  
WILLIAM KEY BOND EMERSON, JUNIOR  
CHARLES HENRY FISKE, 3D.  
RICHARD NELVILLE HALL  
WALLER LILE HARRISON, JUNIOR  
GEORGE MERRICK HOLLISTER  
JERRY THOMAS ILLICH  
DOUGLAS MACMONAGLE  
HENRY BREWSTER PALMER  
EDWARD CARTER SORTWELL  
HENRY MONTGOMERY SUCKLEY  
EDWARD ILSLEY TINKHAM



## *Section Four*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. GEORGE ROCKWELL, JR.
- II. RICHARD C. WARE
- III. WILLIAM DE FORD BIGELOW
- IV. LEON H. BUCKLER
- V. CHARLES H. HUNKINS
- VI. HUGH J. KELLEHER

## SUMMARY

SECTION FOUR left Paris for Lorraine in November, 1915, and after a few weeks, at Vaucouleurs, spent the ensuing winter and spring in the Toul-Flirey sector. In June, 1916, it moved to Ippécourt for the great battle of Verdun, where it had the distinction of being the first of the Field Service sections to serve the famous *postes* at Marre and Esnes. For nearly a year the Section remained in the region of Ippécourt and Rarécourt in the Verdun sector. In May, 1917, it moved on to Champagne, where it remained for two months; then it went back again to Verdun, this time to the Bras-Vacherauville sector. It was at this point that the Section enlisted with the United States Army in the autumn of 1917, as Section Six-Twenty-Seven.



## Section Four

Broke to every known mischance, lifted over all  
By the light sane joy of life, the buckler of the Gaul,  
Furious in luxury, merciless in toil,  
Terrible with strength that draws from her tireless soil,  
Strictest judge of her own worth, gentlest of man's mind,  
First to follow truth and last to leave old truths behind —  
France beloved of every soul that loves its fellow-kind!

RUDYARD KIPLING

### I

#### SECTION FOUR'S BEGINNING

THE night before we were to leave Paris early in November, 1915, we had a dinner with the officers of the Field Service. There were not many speeches, but we were reminded that we were in charge of one of the best-equipped Sections which had as yet taken the field, and that we were going to the front in an auxiliary capacity to take the place of Frenchmen needed for the sterner work of the trenches. We might be sent immediately to the front or kept for a while in the rear; but in any event there were sick and wounded to be carried and our job was to help by obeying orders.

Early the next morning we ran through the Bois-de-Boulogne and over an historic route to Versailles, where, at the Headquarters of the Army Automobile Service, our cars were numbered with a military serial and the driver of each was given a *livret matricule*, which is an open sesame for gasoline and tires at every motor park in France. Those details were completed about ten o'clock, and we felt at last as if we were French soldiers driving French automobiles on the way to our place at the French front.

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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About thirty kilometres outside of Paris the staff car and the *camionnette* with the cook on board dashed by us, and upon our arrival at a quaint little village we found a café requisitioned for our use and its stock of meat, bread, and red wine in profusion at our disposal. In the evening we reached the town of Esternay and there again all was prepared for our reception. Rooms were requisitioned and the good people took us in with open arms and the warmest of hospitality. But one or two of us had to spread our blankets over the stretchers in the back of our cars, because there were not enough rooms and beds for all.

The next morning was much colder; there was some snow and later a heavy fog. Our convoy got under way shortly after breakfast, and ran in record-breaking time, for we wanted to finish our trip that evening. We stopped for lunch and for an inspection which consumed two hours, and starting about ten o'clock on the last stretch of our journey, drove all the afternoon through sleet, cold, and snow.

### IN LORRAINE

At seven o'clock that night we reached Vaucouleurs, had our supper, secured sleeping accommodations, and retired. Our running orders had been completed; we had reached our destination in perfect form. Several days passed. We were inspected by generals and other officers, all of whom seemed pleased with the completeness of our Section; yet improvements, they said, were still possible and should be made while we were at the park. We were told that we were to take care of a service of evacuation of the sick in that district and at the same time try out a "heating system" for our cars.

We were at Vaucouleurs in all six weeks, including Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Our work consisted of evacuating *malades*, and at first it offered the opportunity of teaching the green ones how to care for their cars. But we were all soon put on our mettle.

## SECTION FOUR

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The outlying country was full of lowlands and streams which in many places during the hard rains covered the roads to such a depth that the usual type of French car could not operate. Our car suspension was high, and we were thus able to perform a service the others could not. We established, too, a standard for prompt service and during the weeks we were at Vaucouleurs we never delayed a call on account of "high water." In fact, we left this district for other labor with a record of never having missed a call, and the promptness of service, day or night, was often a matter of comment by the French officials connected with this work. During this flooded period certain *postes* accustomed to telephone for an ambulance would ask for an American ambulance "boat," and the story was soon about that we had water lines painted on the cars as gauges for depths through which we could pass. On one occasion I was in the middle of a swirling rapid with the nearest "land" one hundred yards away. But I had to get through, because I had on board a pneumonia patient with a high fever, so I opened the throttle and charged. When I got to the other side I was hitting on only two cylinders, but as mine was the only car that day to get through at all, I boasted long afterwards of my ambulance's "fording" ability.

### IN THE TOUL SECTOR

WE were always looking forward to being moved and attached to some division within the First Army, and, as promised, the order came. Our service in this district was completed, and on the morning of January 5, 1916, our convoy moved up to Lay-Saint-Remy. Our work here included *postes de secours* that were intermittently under fire, and several of the places could be reached only at night, being in daylight within plain view of the German gunners.

Here again we remained only a short time. Without any warning we received an order one evening to proceed the next day to Toul. This meant 7 A.M., and so all night

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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we were busy filling our gasoline tanks, cleaning spark-plugs, and getting a dismantled car in shape to "roll."

The trip to Toul was without incident, and when we drew up at the *caserne*, which proved to be our quarters for several months, we reported as ready for immediate work. Five cars were regularly stationed at Grosrouvres, a secondary *poste de secours* about ten kilometres from the lines, and two cars farther forward at the Carrière de Flirey, a first-line *poste de secours*. The rest of the ambulances formed a reserve at our base to relieve daily those cars and take care of such emergency calls as might come in, day or night. Then, as soon as we proved our worth, we were given other similar points on the lines, and gradually took over the work of the French Section working with the next Army division.

Seicheprey and the Bois de Jury were two of our *postes* the first being but four hundred yards from the Boche trenches. All winter we kept up this and evacuation work from the hospital at Ménil-la-Tour and the hospital at Toul. In the middle of February we had two cars at Jouy, and there we served the *postes* of Xivray, Bouconville, Barrière d'Apremont, Rambucourt, and Beaumont, while at the same time we took over the evacuation work at Aulnois, Void, and Pagny, which gave us all the ambulance work between Apremont and Limey, a front of twenty kilometres, and the work of two divisions. The Section had its hands full, until June, when we had a few days *repos* at Bayon. But by the 15th, we again began work, this time in the great battle of Verdun.

GEORGE ROCKWELL, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Waterbury, Connecticut; joined the Service in February, 1915, serving with Section One and, as *Sous-Chef*, with Section Four until August, 1916. Later obtained a commission in U.S. Aviation.

PRESENTED BY  
STUDENTS AND FRIENDS  
OF BROWN UNIVERSITY PROVIDENCE  
R.I. U.S.A.



THE "CAT" OF "SECTION QUATRE"

Side-door of one of the cars, with the memorial plaque which  
each ambulance in the Service bore



## II

### CALLS AT NIGHTFALL

AT Toul, we handled practically the entire first-line Ambulance Service of two divisions, embracing the front covered by the 101st Division from Girauroisin to Xivray, and that from Xivray to Noviant, the province of the 64th. In addition, we took care of the greater part of the evacuation work between the various *ambulances* and hospitals back of the lines.

Of the two sectors, that of the 101st Division was the least interesting and most confining; calls were not very frequent — seldom as many as two a night — and usually nothing to do all day, yet the men had to stay always within reach, and any walking other than through the little village of Jouy was out of the question. Quarters were in an old wine-cellar — a long, stone-arched room dug half into the hillside, with a single attic-story over it — lighted dimly by a tiny window at either end, and very inadequately heated by a small, wood-burning stove. Along both sides were ranged wooden frames, knocked together and filled with straw, the bunks of the unusually noisy group of *brancardiers*, or stretcher-bearers, with whom we were quartered. . . .

After supper the fire is filled up, the *brancardiers* gather in chattering groups or slip into their bunks; the overloaded flue is unequal to the volume of smoke, which gathers in a blue cloud overhead, thicker and thicker — lower and lower — will the fire give out before the smoke level reaches the sleepers?

The calls at Jouy usually come in about nightfall, just as the long *ravitaillement*, or supply trains, are starting for the front under cover of the darkness. This makes the running unusually difficult: M. Merland, the genial young *médecin auxiliare*, in private life a medical student, takes his seat beside me and with a whirr of the motor

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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we are off through the darkness. Dark, indeed! for no lights are allowed nor auto horn or Klaxon to clear the track ahead. It is nervous work at best, for the roads are narrow and running with mud, and while hard enough in the middle, give way to veritable bogs on either side where the "metalling" or stone surface ends, and beyond this the inevitable deep ditch of this part of France. Unlucky he who gives too generous a berth to the passing wagon! But, in addition, we have to pass an almost endless stream of *ravitaillement* — *fourgons*, caissons, two-wheel carts loaded with full-length young trees, a very dangerous combination to pass, coming and going, appear suddenly out of the darkness, and slide silently by — great *camions* (auto-trucks) of some twelve tons loom out of the nothingness ahead and thunder down upon us — I have a fleeting vision of a little tin "flivver" ground into a mass of junk and jelly in the mud, and only a quick turn of the wheel averts a collision. Always there is the shrill whistle or Merland's sharp "*à droite*" at the critical moment — and always our luck is with us, for we are near the head of the column when we halt outside the town to wait till the Germans' evening bombardment of Gironville is finished. We watch the shells bursting — sharp flashes in the gloom; there is a pause of a couple of minutes, and we move on again.

We reach Gironville and run down its narrow street, hemmed in on the left by the whitewashed stucco backs of the houses, on the right by the little extra-narrow-gauge military railway — that elastic ribbon of ready-made sections, like the children's toy, which follows hard on the heels of the front-line army — horse-operated, hand-operated, engine-operated indiscriminately, as occasion serves — and which twists and winds up hill and down dale, through field and wood, but by preference using the road, where it is a constant menace to the little ambulance, a-wayfaring on a dark night.

"*Arrêtez! Qui est là?*" — and the motor races a moment as we throw out the clutch at the sudden summons.

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"*Ambulance Américaine, Thiaucourt,*" we reply, and at the countersign the proffered bayonet is lowered, and turning sharply to the right we slide down to the long, level, really excellent road to Broussey. It seems clear for the moment, and we open up, cautiously; the road glimmers faintly before us, spectral figures appear suddenly ahead, and at the whistle melt into the darkness at the roadside: the long, ghostly procession of bare trees, just discernible against the sky, glides by — and again we halt before the sentinel at Broussey.

A sharp turn to the left in the middle of the shot-torn town — through the lattice screens placed across the road to shield the passing on the main street from the Boche observing stations in the trenches and on "*le vieux Mont Sec*" which dominates the region — to the right again, and we are on the winding road to Bouconville.

### AT BOUCONVILLE

STILL more "shot up" is Bouconville, and as we run up the long street we can dimly see the sky through shell-holes in roof and gable, or catch a fleeting glimpse of skeleton rafters, gaunt and blackened. We turn silently up to the ruined church, and circling, stop the motor at the *poste de secours*, underground in the corner of the little churchyard. A few dim figures are visible — silent save for occasional whispers.

"*Vos blessés, sont-ils prêts?*" — we whisper also.

"*Il y a un qui n'est pas encore arrivé des tranchées.*"

"*Et combien en tous? — couchés ou assis?*"

"*Trois, dont deux couchés.*"

We wait a few minutes, and presently our *assis* is brought out, moving heavily and clumsily in his great *capote* and broad, hobnailed shoes.

"*Attention à votre tête!*" — the roof is low — and he is seated "*bien en avant*" — *musettes* and knapsack and rifle packed in after him — "*Rosalie — n'oubliez pas ma Rosalie!*" and the long, slender bayonet, with its heavy cartridge belt, is given due place.

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The supports for the third or upper stretcher are lowered and fastened, and one of the *couchés*, not seriously wounded, is lifted on his stretcher and slid into place. The other is a *grave blessé* — both legs badly cut up by an *éclat* — one will probably have to be amputated. Very gently his stretcher is pushed into place, and very gently we start on our return trip.

But soon there is a sharp tap on the little window behind my head, and the *assis* calls out, as we open, that there is trouble with the *grave blessé*. Sure enough there is a tiny stream of blood dripping out from under the tail-board, and Merland is galvanized into quick action. Flashlight in hand — carefully shielded, however, lest the Boches see us — he tightens the *pansement*, straining on the bandage until the slow, full dripping ceases — and once more we are *en route*, Merland now riding inside. Again, after passing Broussey, we stop while the anxious *auxiliaire* looks over his charge, still further tightening the dressing; but strength is ebbing fast, and just outside Jouy we halt for a third time, take out the *assis* and the other *couché*, while Merland tries to give a hypodermic. But the needle breaks, and loading up, we speed into the town and draw up at the *hospice* just as the first shell of the renewed bombardment screams in down the street. Merland hurries in, attendants appear — we dismount our patient to the ground, and the *Médecin Chef*, who comes out on the run, feels the flagging pulse, and quickly gives the required injection.

“*Allez! — allez vite!*” — and we are off again. No regard now to sparing pain — speed is the essential, and the little motor hums busily to advanced spark and open throttle. Just outside Jouy we round a corner and are out of sight of Mont Sec, so stop a moment to light the headlamps; and with their aid increased speed is attainable. At Aulnois the *assis* and the less seriously injured *couché* are left; once more our “bad case” is given a hypodermic, and again we are off.

The long run on to Void is uneventful — no further

## SECTION FOUR

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serious loss of blood, but a steady loss of strength. However, our patient still retains consciousness, and we start on our homeward journey with the warming assurance that he will pull through.

And as I put the car away, the last shell of the evening's bombardment snarls in and bursts a hundred yards up the street.

### THE CARRIÈRE DE FLIREY

THE Carrière de Flirey! Always it appears to my inner mind as I first saw, or rather sensed it, for it was well-nigh pitch dark. It was my first tour on the Grosrouvres service, and I had already had one call to battered, exposed Seicheprey earlier in the evening, leaving my *blessés* at Ménil-la-Tour and returning about 10 P.M. to tumble into my sketchy bunk for what sleep might be my fortune. But at two o'clock came the fateful steps outside the door, and "Froggie," the telephonist, peered in, "*Carrière! C'est vous qui parte?*" — for neither of the other slumberers, having come in after me, had moved. "Oui," and I tumbled out, and shortly, with a *brancardier* beside me, was spinning off toward Bernécourt; spinning, that is, as fast as the ferociously bad road and the still thick traffic would allow. We rocked through the boulders of Bernécourt, and bore away along a road new to me, and for half a mile or so, pleasantly smooth. Then it got suddenly and surprisingly rough — "Old shell-holes — there is a battery right beside the road, and the Boches try for it all the time," remarked my comrade. We passed the repaired part and swung in through cloudy woods that seemed at once to engulf us, the road, and what little glimmer there had been, in one all-smothering blackness.

More by touch and feel than by sight, we swung around the corner and down the hill toward where a feeble point of light served merely to dazzle and to render the surrounding blackness still more impenetrable — and — "*Halte-là!*" — my guide being only less new to the place

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than myself — brought up short almost against great sandbag barriers, where an inquiring sentry held an embarrassingly long bayonet just where it would most interfere with my internal economy. We had overrun our turning, so, backing carefully a hundred yards, we came to a gently sloping branch leading down past the bothering light to a road up the middle of a long trough of blackness. Backing the car into a broad shed, I followed my guide to a door a few yards away, which we entered, to find, by the momentary flicker of a match, a rough, board-lined room, with seven or eight bunks, and a small, cold stove. One bunk was empty, and bidding my comrade good-night as he left for his own quarters, I turned in, and in spite of entire absence of ventilation was soon sleeping with the best of them to a lullaby of occasional sharp *rafales* from one or two batteries of "75's" close at hand.

The Carrière de Flirey shows by day a narrow ravine, running east from the road to Flirey, and parallel to the trenches: a gray road along the centre, between the slopes on either side thickly covered with slim young growth — a ribbon of the little, narrow-gauge hand-and-horse-railway that the French use to such good advantage, along its southern, wooded slope. And the northern slope, all rich browns and reds; soft creams and yellows, from the torn earth and rock, and honeycombed with a quadruple row of shacks of all kinds, built back into the *abris* or dugouts, in the solid hillside. And yet, such are the exigencies of modern warfare, where the all-seeing eye of the aeroplane is ever overhead, the necessity for concealment, for protective coloring, has made what would else be raw and tawdry a thing of real charm and interest. Branches of evergreen hide fresh stonework; rough, generous blotches of brown, green, and black paint transform staring wood surfaces to the quiet tones of field and wood; and corrugated iron roofing is hidden under great crossed beams, which are in turn covered with generous layers of earth and rock. So that, save for the

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darkness of opened doors and windows, there is little revealed to the scouting aeroplane of the busy life within — the electric power station, the telephone exchange, the operating-room, offices, supply chambers, what-not.

Across the end of the Carrière, the road leads through the barriers, around the shoulder of the hill, down through desolate Flirey, and out through the German lines. Across the road are trenches, *boyaux*, and yet more trenches, in the straggling ranks of modern military science — out and out to No Man's Land. And back of the trenches, woods, and yet more woods; and here, there, and everywhere, in all sorts of likely and unlikely places, the big and little guns of France — never tiring, never sleeping.

The Carrière de Flirey — a busy and a *mauvais endroit*. Overhead tore the French shells, with the sound of ripping cotton; or the German shells sailed over, bound for villages far back, with a sort of protesting whimper — or swished in on us with a sudden, indescribably vicious snarl. From around us came the booming roar of the big guns, or the peculiarly sharp bark of the "75's"; and from those located behind us there was an unusual echo effect that I have heard nowhere else — "Oom *pow!* oom — *pow!* oom — *pow!*" — would come the ear-splitting salvo, and the little shells, in which the *poilu* rightly places so much trust, would tear away overhead.

A *mauvais endroit* — here men were killed and wounded almost at our sides — Adamson saw two killed within five or six yards of him. Here the road winding down to the valley was under direct observation from the German *drachen* or observation balloon over behind Flirey — how we did hate that balloon! — and the enemy artillery had accurately registered it, so that, day or night, those traversing it had to take their medicine as it came.

And the Flirey front was bad, too — never a rest for the troops, for they were always under fire; and ever the freshly wounded were brought back to the little dressing-

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station, whence we hurried them back to final treatment; and ever the little wattled morgue received new inmates, and silently, day by day, the long cemetery across the road grew and spread along the curving valley.

The Carrière service being the most important, the entire activities of the Grosrouvres Squad revolved about it; one car was kept in the shed "garage" in the little valley, the *conducteur* living with the *brancardiers*, and eating, now in the little iron-roofed "kitchen" dug back into the hillside above, or again with some of the friendly officers, or with M. Harel, the genial *aumônier* of the Division, black-bearded and efficient. Cases of minor importance, sickness or slight wounds, were kept till there were enough to make a load — but *graves blessés* or seriously sick men were sent in to Toul at once. The departure of the ambulance at any time, day or night, was signal for a telephone message to Grosrouvres for another car, which usually arrived a few minutes after the first had left, so that the *poste* was always covered. Indeed, the sending in of *blessés* from the trenches was always telephoned from the trench station to the Carrière, so that the operating-room might be in readiness, and on such occasions the relief car was usually telephoned for at once, and arrived often before the first ambulance had started away.

### AT SEICHEPREY IN 1916

THE cars not on duty at the Carrière — two or three, depending on whether or not Flirey was busy requiring a car *en remplacement* — the remaining cars of the Squad took care of calls from the other *postes* along the front, and of the towns lying farther back. Seicheprey, down in the valley, badly ruined, and fully exposed to gun- and rifle-fire — as was also the white road pitching down into it — we visited only at night. Even then there were occasions when some of our drivers had their thrilling moments, as when Dayton's heavily loaded wheels refused to grip the mud, leaving his car for long minutes

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clearly outlined in the blaze of one of the rare moonlit nights, apparently immovable and well in range of the ever-nearing rifle bullets; a providential cloud, a blanket under the wheel, and no damage done.

Daylight runs to the *poste de secours* of the Bois de Jury had, as was pointed out in a special commendation from the Division, never been undertaken prior to the advent of the Section. The road led from Beaumont along a crest fully exposed to observation from Mont Sec—*le vieux Mont Sec*, as the *poilus* termed it, much as we would say “the old Nick”—it being held and gunned by the Germans. And as the road and its vicinity were not infrequently thoroughly shelled by the Boches in their search for French batteries, and as one felt that to a part, at least, of the enemy forces the Red Cross meant nothing, the daylight traverse was not without its thrill.

### MAKING “THE ROUTE”

BEAUMONT and Mandres, Hamonville and Ansauville, Bernécourt and Noviant, all had to be visited; sickness, accidents, wounds—the towns were full of soldiers in reserve, and all had to be cared for. And even well back of the lines there was often “excitement” for us. I well remember the creepy-crawly feeling up and down my spine as a shell snored and snarled along, following my car in a direct line as I entered Ansauville, and the feeling of relief as it passed close overhead, after all, to burst on the far side of a row of houses just ahead. And there is also Allen’s vivid description of his passage through Hamonville with a load of *assis*, to the alternate tune of *obus* snarling in and earnest beseeching from his passengers to “*Allez! — allez! — allez! —*”

And at Grosrouvres itself, well-placed shells threw mud and stones over our already well-muddied cars; on another occasion dropped a still hot fuse-head at Rantoul’s feet, and again was deposited, through the kitchen ceiling, a fresh, hot piece of *éclat* in our salad. But the kitchen was empty at the time, for on the occasions when these

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barracks towns were honored by bombardments, the open fields took on a decidedly populous appearance.

That salad was not our only culinary experiment — for there was the almost equally famous occasion when the rat, trying to navigate the chimney above, missed his hold and fell, like Milton's Satan — but minus his flames — down the great fireplace, and square into our coffee. Shelled salad was one thing, but *café au rat* — alas! we went coffeeless to bed. Rats! They were a pest in more ways than one — they increased and multiplied without stint; they ran riot through our Grosrouvres quarters; they ran up and down the wall, shrieking anathema at one another; they fell on us in bed, and tried to hide crusts beneath our pillows. At the Carrière they pervaded every corner, and like the ghosts in "Julius Cæsar" "did squeak and gibber" round the shacks. We looked in vain for a Pied Piper; frankly, I see no hope for the war zone short of so serious a food shortage that M. Rat will find a place on the menu.

### THE GRIM REALITY

THESE were the lighter sides of the service; but ever there was the grim reality of the devil's work going on ahead. At first the wounds were mostly from shell and occasionally from shrapnel; then gradually the percentage of grenade wounds rose; and toward the end of our stay, ugly things from trench torpedoes were much in evidence. The poor, torn fellows were brought in at all times of the day and night; but naturally the night runs were hardest. The first fifteen kilometres had to be covered without lights of any kind, and this over the worst possible of war-torn roads. It seemed inconceivable that mere traffic could so completely wreck a really good French road; great ruts, holes, deep gullies across the highway, made the poor car pitch and toss and roll drunkenly like a logy tramp steamer in a cross-chop sea. Try as we might from Bernécourt to Ménil-la-Tour, it was impossible to prevent racking the poor *blessés*, even



MISFORTUNES OF WAR!



AMERICAN AMBULANCES IN A RUINED VILLAGE NEAR  
VERDUN SECTION FOUR AT IPPECOURT



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in broad day; at night it was infinitely worse, and we suffered, I believe, almost as much as the wounded men themselves. A long, hard ride for a badly hurt man, a bitterly cold ride, for all the blankets rolled around him, for a man suffering from the dead chill that follows much loss of blood — some thirty kilometres to the big hospital — an hour's to three hours' running depending on the gravity of the case and the amount of light available. But it was always a comfort to reflect that the evils were at any rate much less than earlier in the war, and that the tortures and delays of the old-style horse-drawn ambulances were, for such service, things of the past.

Compared to the awful run in from the Carrière, all our other service at Toul was sheer delight — the roads good, for war-time roads, and the percentage of *graves blessés* low; but no chronicle of our sojourn during this time would be complete without mention of the weather and mud of France at war. Out of our entire four months' stay in the Toul sector, I doubt if there were ten pleasant days. Mostly it blew — violently; almost always it rained. The yard was a great bowl of mud, with one or two great water-filled depressions in which the *camion* drivers washed their cars; the streets were seas of grayish, gritty liquid that covered car and driver from top to bottom, and, lashing out in horizontal sheets, drenched the unhappy *poilu* who did not make for the open field when he saw a fast staff car coming. As for the ploughed fields, they were well-nigh impassable; the whole of France showed a marked inclination to rise with each uplifted foot, and Mother Earth firmly and instantly resented — in great slabs — any attempt to stroll across lots.

### VERDUN AT LAST

IPPÉCOURT lies some twenty miles back of the front-line trenches of Verdun, but ever and anon, in the lulls of the storm, came to our ears the interminable rumbling and grumbling, the steady, pattering roar as of a distant cas-

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cade of great boulders — but sinister and horrible in its relentless busy-ness.

Late on the night of the 15th, came a call for the entire Section; there had been an attack by the French — a successful attack — on the Mort Homme, and we were to evacuate the *blessés* as fast as they could be rushed through the receiving hospitals.

This marked our entrance into the Battle of Verdun, for the work was now too heavy for the French Sections in the sector to handle alone, and the next night, that of the 16th, we were called on for front-line work once more. Hansen, McCall, Allen, and I took the first run, and following Lieutenant de Turckheim, reached Fromeréville at dusk, and looked over our new advanced base. The cars stood in the main street until sent for, and before starting, and on arriving once more, we were to report at the telephone station of the *G.B.D.* (*Groupe Brancardier Divisionnaire*) in the *abri* that had been made in the back of a little *débitant* store. "Bourgeois" was the name over the door, and "Bourgeois" grew to look almost like home and mother after many a trying trip.

Our road, shimmering in the moonlight, ran up through the French gun positions — hundreds of them; everywhere, the fields were dotted with the little aiming-point lights — and through the German artillery fire, some six miles in all. The first three, to Béthelainville were easy going, the road good, and little traffic. At Béthelainville the fun began — bad shell-holes, water-filled, made the going difficult, and there was a sharp turn through a black, narrow alley, down which, without warning, the *ravitaillement* trains charged at a swinging clip. It was a bad corner, on which the Boches had "ranged" very successfully, and one could never tell when a shell would snarl in; so that the drivers were not to be blamed for "hitting it up" a bit.

And now began the worst of the going. The farther we came, the thicker were the guns around us, bellowing, booming, barking, and cracking on all sides — in the val-

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leys below, in the fields alongside, from the hillsides above us; and the thicker became the *arrosage* of German shells. Where not torn by shell-fire, the road was simply worn to unbelievable roughness; often hub-deep in mud, the bottom was pitted and rutted as if by a violent earthquake, and, try as we would, the cars would pitch and toss, rolling drunkenly like a dory in a tide-rip. . . .

On, up the winding road, narrower now than ever, and crammed with supply trains — a chance shell here would make rare havoc; but it's all in the game, and the supplies must be got up, regardless of the cost. Now the going is better for a space, as we run around the crest of a long hill; and here the guns are below us, indicated only by the keen stabs of flame from the "75's" or the dazzling bursts from the big fellows. Again the road swings, pitching down, this time, and the scarred surface and torn banks show that the stretch, clearly visible from the enemy's *drachens*, is thoroughly "registered," and frequently swept by their fire.

Down we swing toward a ruined town, gleaming wanly in the moonlight, from which comes ever and anon the snarl and flat, dull crash of an arriving big shell — Montzéville; but halfway down the slope, we swing sharply to the right, and strike over a little rise and down into a very wilderness of great holes; for here, almost against the roads, is a battery of great French guns, and on these and the road is rained an intermittent shower of big German shells.

Up goes the road again, and down through another labyrinth of holes, here again the Boches had accurate registration; and up again, gradually, till we came out on the top of the world, with the torn battle-field of Hill 304 and the Mort Homme glimmering ghostlike to the north of us.

### HILL 272

In the bank beside us a *boyau* leads to the entrance to the *poste de secours* of Hill 272 — down several steps cut

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in the clay, through a couple of blanket curtains, into an *abri* whose arched roof of corrugated steel supports many feet of dirt and stone. Here are rude bunks, straw-filled, on the floor on either side of a narrow passageway; the white glare of the single acetylene flame throws into high relief and black shadow the drawn, resigned faces of the *blessés*, who, mud-covered, bandaged and blood-stained, fill the all-too-small shelter to overflowing. At the far end a curtain shuts off a portion reserved for the *médecin auxiliaire* in charge of the *poste*, his records and supplies.

Outside once more, we find the road on either side lined with *blessés*, sitting, standing, or helpless on stretchers, fully and unavoidably exposed to chance shell-fire; there is no room below, and expeditious transport is the only answer. As quickly as may be we load up — three *couchés* inside, two *assis* in front with me — and begin the long, hard run back. Easing into shell-holes, crawling out carefully, the going is not so bad for a while; but gradually the light becomes deceptive, the holes are no longer evident, and racking and rolling through the worst places, we finally reach and pass the torn streets of Béthelainville and roll smoothly on to Fromeréville.

Such was the Hill 272 run — simple enough in the telling, but infinitely nerve-racking in actuality, especially on a pitch-dark, rainy night; for every jolt and jar meant to the driver, mindful of his charge, only less torture than to the *blessé* himself, and the moans and agonized “*là-là’s*” of the poor fellows behind went through one like a knife.

To this night duty was added that of a twenty-four hour picket — one car always on call at Fromeréville for special work — emergency day calls, etc. We were not supposed to visit Hill 272 by day, but I can clearly recall my first tour as picket and the message received about 7 A.M.: “*Grave blessé à la Côte Deux-cent-soixante-douze.*” A lift on the crank and we were off, skimming smoothly through a fresh, clear morning, the sunshine gleaming from daisy-starred, poppy-jewelled fields, flam-

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ing on the red, scarred tracks leading in a vast network to the countless guns, and losing itself in the cool shade of the little grove beyond Béthelainville. On past Vignéville; and now, well up in the crystal-clear air, across the lines, shone the opalescent *drachens* of the German artillery — were the observation officers Prussians, or more kindly disposed beings? The little ambulance, crawling now among the shell-holes, would make a splendid target, and in modern warfare as practised by the Boche, the Red Cross was no guarantee of security. On around Calvary corner, and up across the roof of all the world, a wonderful "sporting chance" for their guns — but not taken. Stopping at the *poste*, the *brancardiers* brought out an officer, blackened of face, unconscious, breath coming in heaves through froth-rimmed mouth; he could not breathe, flat on the stretcher, and we packed blankets gently under head and shoulders; several *assis* were brought out, and the *brancardiers* hastened back to shelter — in ten days they had lost thirteen out of thirty, and they were properly cautious.

### SECTION FOUR AT VERDUN

*July 21, 1916*

SOME four or five miles back of the lines, we stop for orders — several cars lined up along the street. Fromeréville is bombarded rather frequently by a long-range, flat-trajectory, five-inch gun, and the Germans occasionally do pretty good shooting. It was taken rather as a matter of course, at first — not too much attention to be paid to it; but one night about two o'clock — I was there on twenty-four-hour duty — there came the familiar "boom" followed by the rather regretful snarl of this particular gun's missives, and the usual dull, flat explosion down the street, with the accompanying rattle and clash and clatter of broken tiles, like the proverbial bull in the china shop, showing that they had struck a house. Men began to drift into the *abri* pretty quickly, dressing as they came, and at casual and leisurely intervals the

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big gun boomed again, and the shots whirled in, marching steadily down the street toward and past us; sometimes a man entering rather shamefacedly — as if he only came because it was the proper thing to do, and not because he wanted to — would hear the bang outside and be almost lifted by his own reflex action into the room, galvanized into life, and changing expression rather ludicrously. It was all rather gay, and there was a good deal of jollying and laughing, and a little buzz of good-natured comment at each fresh bang from outside, till after twelve or fifteen shots — some ten minutes, perhaps, in all — there came no more, and we streamed out into the street for a breath of fresh air, and then, for the soldiers, bed again.

But at the door we met a group of men, rather hushed in their talk, carrying in two or three wounded men. "*La maison au coin, là-bas!*" I heard. "*Il est mort?*" "*Oh, oui —*" So I went down to the corner. Except for a few broken panes it did n't look very different, this house, so I went in and peered over the shoulders of the quiet little group that had preceded me. There was nothing to be done — it was quite complete. The shell had entered the back of the house, passed through the room without exploding, entered the big chimney in the middle of the house, passed through it, and exploded in the great stone mantel. The front room looked singularly flat, no colors and peculiarly little light and shade effect in the feeble glimmer of the one candle — all was one dull, mat gray, walls, ceiling, furniture, hangings, thickly covered with a coating of fine plaster and stone dust. Down from the great gaping hole in the chimney breast streamed a long pile of *débris*, gleaming pale in the flickering light, and at the end of the pile on the floor at our feet, gray and almost indistinguishable, huddled on his breast, one hand, palm upturned, flung across his back, lay what was left of one who had started too late. Head completely gone — I don't think they ever found any of it — a little dark stain on the floor; and across the room a big grandfather's clock — I looked at it to see at what time the explosion

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had stopped it — was still ticking away unconcernedly. It was one of the last shells that did it, and had he moved sooner — but none ever *had* struck there and it probably seemed foolish to bother. . . .

### A POSTE — SHELLS — AND REPOS!

July, 1916

THE road here is sunk perhaps three or four feet, and on one side is a wide ditch bridged at intervals, with little caves dug into the bank back of the covered places — a ditch which, in time of heavy rains, beds a rushing torrent which fills the little burrows three or four feet deep; and these are "homes" of *aumôniers*, *brancardiers*, etc. On the other side of the road a *boyau*, or trench, leads into the bank, and off it, on one branch is the cook's *abri*; and on the other, down a flight of steps dug in the hard clay, through two blanket curtains — light must not be allowed to filter out — we find the main *abri* of the *poste de secours*. Some thirty feet by ten wide, a great shell of corrugated iron, covered several feet deep with earth; one third partitioned off for the officers and the *bureau*, the rest simply a long narrow passage down the middle, separated by board strips from the four-foot-wide piles of straw on either side which serve as beds for waiting *brancardiers*, *malades*, or *blessés*. A single acetylene lamp usually lights both sides of the partition; smoke — there is n't much else to do — a little chat, sometimes an argument, and always the little flurry of interest and excitement when we bring the contribution of papers from Bartlett and Crane — "*Les Russes marchent toujours bien?*" — "*Et les Anglais? ce n'est pas vite, en effet, mais c'est bien sûr.*" "*A la Somme nos prisonniers sont maintenant 8000!*" — "*Oh! nous les aurons!*" And they are much interested in our politics — Germany at the bottom of the Mexican trouble — was Roosevelt going to run — would Wilson be re-elected — and what sort of a man was "*Monsieur Ooges?*" The French are marvelously patient with our wandering diplomacy, unexpect-

edly cognizant of our difficulties; and their journals are, if anything, over-fair. But they all seem to ask, "When will the true United States speak?" It is n't action that they want (though there are many who feel that we should be supplying free ammunition and things as a government taking part in a job of world-policing, rather than selling as individuals). But they still hope to see our country live up to its ideals and leave its impossible policy of aloofness — the "none-of-my-business-so-long-as-it-does n't-touch-my-pocket" attitude.

Away there to the north, just not visible over the crest, three kilometres away, are the trenches. They were pushed over the first week we were here, leaving behind — we can see it all clearly when we have to make a daylight trip — a great slope of raw, scarred, and furrowed clay, pitted with great craters, with zigzag *boyaux* running up, and long, wavy lines of trenches length-wise — no sign of life — apparently an absolutely barren waste — till something starts.

But at night here is none of this visible — sheer blackness on dark nights, or, when it is clear, the long, dim outline of the hills, dark against the dull sky above, with ever a light cloud of mist or smoke hanging low over the trenches. Up from the lines, now here, now there, rise the quick, soaring arrow-sprays of the rocket-lights — the *fusées éclairantes* — a golden pencil-stroke of stardust, breaking, high over the trenches, into a single, great, dazzling ball of white fire; the rocket head shoots on up with its train of fire and, still mounting, disappears in the darkness. The flare, flickering slightly, more powerful and more brilliant than any arc light, sinks, now drifting or falling rapidly, now almost stationary, the vast shadow of its supporting parachute wheeling above it on the low-hung clouds; beneath, for miles around, the light of a decent-sized moonlit night. When going away from the lines this light is really of great assistance to us. These are the French lights, lasting for ten or twelve minutes. The German flares ignite at once, as they ascend,



SECTION FOUR ON SERVICE IN VERDUN



EVACUATION HOSPITAL AT GLORIUX AT THE MOMENT OF AN ATTACK  
ON THE VERDUN FRONT, 1917



## SECTION FOUR

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descend quickly, and do not last long. Green-starred rockets, red-starred rockets, rockets that release long strings of white stars, or red or green stars, falling in long serpentine trains, or great showers of stars, veritable constellations, each presumably giving its message as to range, attacks, etc., to the distant artillery, in a code presumably changed constantly — the whole front from Switzerland to the sea is one long *feu d'artifice*, nightly repeated.

September, 1916

AROUND us the guns are constantly at it — sometimes all at once in an attack, more often turn and turn about — now here, now there, the short, sharp bark of the "75," with the wicked, tearing swish and snarl of the shell hurtling off overhead, soon lost to hearing; the lively boom and deeper note of the medium-sized weapons; the deep crash of the big chaps followed by the roar as of a heavy express train entering a railway cut as the shell tears off into the far, high places above; every now and then some big gun, more distant, emits a sort of mellow, musical note, and the projectile eases off on its errand, calmly and quietly, with an accent of confidence. This is singularly emphasized in the case of the big shells passing overhead from so far behind that the boom of the gun is lost — we merely hear an unhurried, dispassionate whisper overhead, "I'm not saying much, I'm not worrying, I'm not hurrying, but I'm on my way — just wait and —" He passes on with all the airs of manifest destiny, and all is quiet till away in front rises a great ragged sheet of smoke and flame, and a few seconds later the heavy, sullen "*G-r-r-r-oOMP!*" that shows that part of its self-confidence, at any rate, was well-founded. More often, though, the shelling does not appear to be on the lines, but on the roads and villages behind, through which the supply trains and troop reliefs must pass.

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## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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*October, 1916*

AND so our life is very pleasant, when the weather permits — which it mostly does n't; we run at night, but not every night, sleep until lunch-time, and then work on the cars or sit out on our pleasant little slope lazily watching the clouds drifting across, the aeroplanes and birds wheeling overhead, listening to the wind constantly whispering and rustling in the poplars along the busy little brook, the bright little chirrups and trills and liquid notes of the birds, the gay and voluble chat of the little groups of soldiers. . . .

RICHARD C. WARE<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Milton, Mass.; Harvard, '04; served ten months in Section Four in 1916, and as *Sous-Chef* of the Section; subsequently a Captain in the U. S. Field Artillery.



### III

#### NEAR MORT HOMME AND HILL 304

THE Section was cantoned, in July, 1916, under canvas among the ruins of Ippécourt, destroyed in the Battle of the Marne, and about twenty-five kilometres from Verdun. The unit was commanded by the French *Sous-Lieutenant*, Frederic de Turckheim, with Oliver H. Perry as *Chef*, and Paul Delanoy as *Maréchal des Logis*. We did front *poste* work only, for the 64th and 65th Divisions which were resisting the Boche counter-attacks after the big Verdun battle of a few months before. The runs were almost entirely at night from Ippécourt to the main *poste* at Fromeréville, a town badly damaged by shell-fire and situated between Verdun and the lines of the famous Mort Homme and Hill 304. Several roads lead to Fromeréville from Ippécourt, Osches, Lemmes, Souilly, Jubécourt, Rampont, Souhesme, and Dombasle. The last-named route was badly shelled and frequently dangerous. Fromeréville was often under fire.

The runs to front *postes* were from Fromeréville to Hill 272 just back of the Mort Homme, passing through what was left of Béthelainville and Vignéville. There was another run from Fromeréville to Marre, a *poste* four hundred metres from the Boche lines and fourteen kilometres from Fromeréville. This route skirted Verdun and ran along the left bank of the Meuse past Charny. Marre, completely in ruins, is close to Chattancourt, from which the *blessés* were brought in.

A third run was a short one to the ruins of Germenville, a town on the edge of the Bois Bourrus, where were a lot of French batteries. Hill 272 was quite spectacular, as it looked over the trenches on the Mort Homme, and to go thither you passed a corner we called Calvary, on account of a grave there with a huge cross.

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All these roads were badly rutted with shell-holes which made the driving difficult. At one time the holes were so numerous and deep that, for thirty hours, four men who had gone to one of the *postes* could not get back with their ambulances, but were forced to bring the wounded back as far as they could, unload them and carry them, by hand, through the bad place on the road, and then put them into other ambulances which had been sent for the purpose. The French batteries, lined along the road, added to our troubles by their noise, while star-shells, bursting *éclats*, and shrapnel in the sky were like fireworks. These helped a little, as they lighted us on our way.

### THE DEATH OF KELLEY

AT ten o'clock in the evening of September 23, Roswell Sanders, in company with Edward Kelley, was driving his ambulance through Marre on his way to the *poste*. When about two hundred yards from the *poste*, a shell exploded in front of the car, killing Kelley instantly and badly wounding Sanders in the head. The driver of another ambulance, Robert Gooch, who was in a neighbouring *abri*, came out, went down the road alone under machine-gun-fire, and brought in Kelley's body. Kelley was buried two days later at a near-by town, Blercourt, while Sanders, after hovering between life and death for two weeks at the nearest field hospital, finally recovered. Kelley received the *Croix de Guerre* and Sanders the *Médaille Militaire* and the *Croix de Guerre*.

In the little stone chapel of the village a funeral service was held, brief, simple, and sincere, yet amazingly impressive because of that simplicity. The small procession, sturdy of faith and loyalty, wound slowly up onto the hillside at the town's edge, where crouched brown earth heaps beside new graves. There was a choir of grizzled *brancardiers*, in their stained, faded *tenue* once horizon-blue, whose hearts were in their voices. The *aumônier*, clad in uniform of war, read the service for the dead, fondly and movingly. Then Lieutenant de Turckheim

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put into words the *adieu* and feelings of the Section. Those deeper feelings which are well-nigh impossible for an American to voice. The *Médecin Inspecteur*, M. Gouzin, spoke in appreciation at the new-turned grave:

C'est dans une douloureuse étreinte que nous sommes réunis autour de ce cercueil, pour rendre les derniers devoirs au conducteur volontaire américain Kelley, Edward, mort pour la France.

Voulant apporter à la cause sacrée l'ardeur de sa jeunesse, il vient, d'un geste généreux, de cueillir dans la mort son premier laurier.

C'était, en effet, son voyage de début dans le secteur, et le conducteur Sanders, Roswell — un vétéran de ces missions périlleuses — qui lui servait de guide, s'est lui-même, sans partager le sort fatal de son camarade, inscrit à ses côtés au livre d'or des braves de la Grande Guerre.

Nous les voyons chaque jour à l'œuvre ces vaillantes sections sanitaires, et, dans des circonstances toutes récentes, nous avons pu admirer avec quel sang-froid, quelle intrépidité, quelle habileté, quelle sollicitude touchante pour nos chers blessés, elles s'acquittaient de leur rude et noble tâche, en dépit des difficultés sans nombre.

Ah! que ces jeunes gens au cœur franc, au visage ouvert, expriment bien le caractère loyal et chevaleresque de leur race, ce tempérament qui, sous des dehors froids et réservés, abrite les aspirations et les ardeurs les plus généreuses! Leurs chefs qui, avec la même simplicité, la même modestie, apportent à leur mission tant de compétence et tant de courage, sont justement fiers de commander à de tels hommes, dont ils partagent les fatigues et les dangers.

Et quelle discipline idéale que celle qui, sans autre rein, unit si familièrement toute cette jeunesse d'élite dans un même sentiment de haute pitié, d'abnégation, de sacrifice librement, volontairement consenti! Car vous souffriez de rester inactifs, témoins impassibles du grand conflit mondial, et vous n'avez pas hésité à franchir les mers pour venir spontanément offrir à vos frères d'Europe, meurtris dans la lutte et pantelants, votre aide secourable et désintéressée, aux côtés de vos braves camarades des sections sanitaires françaises.

Dignes fils de la grande République sœur, dignes émules de vos compatriotes, les Chapman, les Rockwell, qui, eux aussi, en d'autres lieux, sont tombés glorieusement au service de notre chère Patrie, vous avez droit à notre reconnaissance infinie, impérissable: nul ici ne vous la ménage, vous êtes nos

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amis et cette affection profonde que tous nous vous portons survivra à l'heure présente.

Devant cette tombe qui va se refermer sur les restes mortels d'un jeune héros, nous nous inclinons avec respect. Votre famille, Edward Kelley, en apprenant la fatale nouvelle, saura du moins que, mort en soldat, décoré de la Croix de Guerre par le Général commandant le Corps d'Armée, vous avez reçu sur le sol de France, les suprêmes honneurs qui vous étaient dus, parmi la foule émue et recueillie de vos compagnons de mission, de vos camarades français. Puisse ce pieux témoignage de notre douloureuse sympathie adoucir l'inconsolable chagrin de ces êtres aimés!

Adieu, Kelley, reposez en paix dans cette terre sanctifiée par votre sang: votre mort est un symbole et un exemple, votre souvenir ne périra pas!

Then each of us tossed some earth onto the coffin in its resting-place and turned away, eyes dry, throats queerly tight — turned away, back to the scurrying tasks of the day's service.

### THE FALL OF 1916

DURING the latter part of September, Section Two was attached to the 65th Division, leaving us the work of the 64th only. We gave up the "Hill" run, which was a *poste* for the 65th, kept Marre and took on the evacuation back from Fromeréville to the hospitals at Blercourt and Vadelaincourt. We also maintained a twenty-four hour *pique*t at Glorieux on the outskirts of Verdun, whence we ran on call to various forts or *postes*, the former being Forts de Charny, Vacherauville, and Sartelles. From the top of the hill back of the large hospital at Glorieux, where we were *en pique*t, one had a splendid view of Verdun, Bras, Vaux, Douaumont, and the whole valley of the Meuse.

During the time we served on these runs we saw the French troops take Fleury, Douaumont, Vaux, and the Fort de Vaux, and later the famous Côte du Poivre. The weather was almost always bad — rainy and foggy — while deep mud was everywhere; from about September 20 on, we began to carry many cases of trench feet and marvelled how the men could live, to say nothing of fight,

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under such conditions; while in addition countless rats were most annoying both to them and us, these pests often running over our bodies and faces when we slept in the *abris*.

About November, we were given a fortnight's *repos*, during which time the only work we did was to keep three cars stationed with the Division at its headquarters back of Vaubecourt, whence we carried the *malades* of the Division to various hospitals at Triaucourt, Condé, Rembercourt, Érize-la-Grande, Érize-la-Petite, and Bar-le-Duc. The rest of the Section remained at Ippécourt, painting and working over ambulances, and then moved just outside Ippécourt to a new cantonment, a long line of small cabins, three of us lodging in each cabin, the park for our cars being the paved space in front. This "home" had been made by Boche prisoners about a year before.

### DOMBASLE — ESNES — VILLE-SUR-COUSANCES

AFTER *repos* our Division moved up into the trenches of Hill 304 and into the Forêt d'Esnes, which meant new *postes* for us. The new Ambulance Headquarters were at Jubécourt with the *triage* at Ville-sur-Cousances. We had one *poste* at Dombasle, another nearer the lines in the Bois de Béthelainville, another at Montzéville and the nearest at Esnes. From Ville-sur-Cousances we evacuated back to Froidos and to the hospital at Fleury-sur-Aire.

In this sector two ambulances were sent every other night for evacuation work at Ville-sur-Cousances, alternating with a French section, while one car was kept at twenty-four hour *piquet* work at Jouy at the bureau of the *Médecin Divisionnaire* and two other cars at Jubécourt for the runs to Montzéville and Esnes. The Jouy ambulance also ran to Montzéville and Esnes on call, with extra ambulances always posted at the cantonment at Ippécourt in case of an emergency. The run from Jubécourt to Esnes was twenty kilometres, passing through Brocourt, Dombasle, and then up over a long hill through the Bois de Béthelainville and down to Montzéville on

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the other side. From the top of this hill one had a remarkable view of the Mort Homme and Hill 304, with shells bursting on the slopes. Montzéville by the way, was a complete wreck of what had once been a smiling village, most of the streets being so littered with *débris* as to be impassable. We managed, however, to keep one street clear, although, in spite of our efforts, it was usually full of shell-holes. Our *poste de secours* here was in an *abri* in the cellar of a wrecked house with ruins everywhere. On the way to Montzéville was a *poste de secours*, an *abri* into the side of a hill, in the Bois de Béthelainville, which was used mostly for sick and for men slightly wounded or suffering from trench feet. It was a good specimen of one of these side-hill dugouts.

The most interesting part of the run was from Montzéville to Esnes, as the road wound back of the famous Hill 304, so that on active nights we had a good view of the star-shells and the general fireworks. This road, I may add, was most desolate in appearance — along each side being only the stumps of trees, broken-down wagons, smashed automobiles, old wire entanglements and *débris* thrown over the ditches; and furthermore, it was rather a river of soupy mud than a highway. There was one spot in it which was particularly bad, full of shell-holes, with a spring underneath. Here we frequently had to build across it a sort of temporary bridge of logs and small wood, in order to get through with our ambulances; sometimes even we had to take out the *blessés* and replace them after our cars had passed the worst stretch.

Esnes itself was absolutely in ruins, with *débris* littered about everywhere. The remains of the church were especially impressive on moonlight nights, and from it led a sort of broken road to the ruins of what had once been a château, in whose cellar was the *poste de secours*. We called this little road "Hogan's Alley," and on black nights it was far from easy to find one's way in. Back of the château, was a battery of "90's," and often the Boche guns in trying to get it would send shells into "Hogan's

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"Alley" and into the courtyard of the château in front of the *poste*. Fortunately none of our drivers or their wounded were ever hit there, although several had some narrow escapes, while some of our cars were not so fortunate. The same good luck was with us on the road from Montzéville and going through the streets of Esnes.

### AN ATTACK

At about 4 P.M., on December 7, the Boches made a very vicious attack on our 340th Regiment, which was in the trenches between the Mort Homme and Hill 304, and drove a salient into our line, thus being able to shoot *en enfilade* down our trenches. Our first car up, leaving Jubécourt at 3.30 heard the *tir de barrage* from the top of Béthelainville Hill, and in spite of the dusk and fog could see the innumerable gas-flashes. On reaching Montzéville we found everything was fairly lively and the *blessés* already being brought to the *poste*. At this point the telephone communications were cut, and as the orders were to take the farthest and most important *poste* first, the driver would leave word for the second car to take back to the *triage* all *blessés* from Montzéville.

This bringing in the wounded was slow work on account of the awful mud which was nearly up to the knees of the *brancardiers*, so that, naturally, progress was difficult for them. For example, it took four *brancardiers* an average of four hours to make the trip of eight hundred yards to the trenches and back with one *blessé couché*. In the end, twelve additional ambulances were telephoned for and arrived in about an hour. They worked all night, some all the following day, and part of them during the next night — such a labor was it to get the wounded to safety. The roads were full of troops, wagons, and guns, which did not help matters. The *poste* in Esnes was much congested with the ambulances coming, going, and waiting outside for the wounded and with the *brancardiers* bringing them in in a steady stream. Montzéville was the same. We also made trips to the *poste* at Hill 232. In fact

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the attacks and counter-attacks kept us very busy for two weeks, our Division regaining all the lost trenches except one salient.

A few days before Christmas we took over an additional *poste de secours* to the left of Esnes, known then as the *Coupeur d'Esnes* and later as *poste B. 2*. This was on the edge of the Forêt de Hesse, between Esnes and Avocourt, and about a kilometre behind the French trenches. The French ambulances had never been up to that *poste*, their weight making it impossible for them to run on the bad road. But our light Fords were able to bring the service two and three kilometres nearer the lines, saving much time and labor for *brancardiers*, who before this brought back the *blessés* either by hand or with two-wheeled carts.

### SNOW AT THE FRONT — REPOS

AFTER December 15, we began to get lots of snow, sleet, and hail, and the weather became much colder, which did not make the driving any easier. There were times even when, notwithstanding chains, we had to put blankets under the wheels in order to get up the hills—especially the Dombasle Hill which was particularly steep.

During the first week in January, 1917, our Division went *en repos* for a week, preparatory to changing sectors, the Division to which Section One was attached taking its place. Section One came over and took our quarters at Ippécourt while we moved into large vacated barracks of the hospital at Glorieux on the edge of Verdun for our *repos*, when every man of our Section had an opportunity to visit thoroughly the famous city.

### THE ARGONNE — WORK IN THE WOODS

ABOUT the middle of January our Division moved over farther to the left in the Argonne sector back of Vauquois and Avocourt. We went with it and took up quarters in Rarécourt, where we replaced English Section Ten and assumed the work at new *postes*, most of which were in the woods. Every afternoon we made a *ramassage* with



CARS OF SECTION FOUR AT IPPÉCOURT, WINTER OF 1916



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an ambulance, visiting the different camps in the woods, getting the sick and taking them back to the *triage*. Our runs to the *postes avancés* were long, and on dark nights very difficult owing to the woods shutting out every vestige of light. Nevertheless, either because we had good, careful drivers, or good luck, or both, it was extraordinary how few accidents we had. The work was light, however, but the weather was exceedingly cold — the coldest winter in twenty-two years, in fact. Yet it was the mud that was the most disagreeable feature of the situation. All the *abris* were made well down in the ground and whenever there came a thaw this mud was everywhere and most irritating.

The cars were kept on twenty-four hours' *piquet* at Camp Dervin and at Bon Abri, running on call to Les Ailleux and B. I. The *poste* at Les Ailleux was within about four hundred yards of the Boche lines and B. I about one kilometre. As in the other sectors of our service, here, too, we were able to advance the *postes* beyond where they had been before, our light Fords being able to travel over the bad roads. B. I, for instance, was at least three kilometres nearer the lines than had ever been the case before.

The other *poste* to which we sent a night *piquet* was Neuville, the ruins of what must have once been an attractive village on the banks of a large stream. From there we sometimes went on call to a *poste* called *Abri Brainière*, which was really very much exposed, as the road to it was in plain view of the German trenches and not over five hundred yards from them. On the way to Neuville we passed through the ruins of Clermont, which had once been a beautiful town. Even as it was, the ruins were most impressive. The town had been built around a great natural acropolis of rock, the top of which was covered with pine trees. On moonlight nights, particularly when there was snow on the ground, the lines of the ruins against the white and sky, with the acropolis looming up, made a wonderful if saddening picture.

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On February 12, 1917, Oliver H. Perry, our *Chef*, left us, much to our regret, after a year's service, during which time he had contributed much to the splendid spirit of service which existed in the Section.

Owing to the extreme cold and to the fact that it was very difficult to find wood, to say nothing of coal, there was considerable sickness in the Section, so that at times only fifty per cent of the drivers were well enough to send out on service.

### THE CHAMPAGNE

TOWARD the last of April Section Four left the 64th Division after having served it sixteen months, preparatory to joining a new Division, which we expected would be in the Champagne sector. In many ways this was a sad parting, as we had so many friends in the Division, and yet we were glad to move to what promised to be a more active field. In the meantime we received a splendid letter of thanks and appreciation for our service from General Colin. Then we went *en repos* for three days at Fains, a town on the outskirts of Bar-le-Duc, where we received orders to move and report to the Fourth Army at Châlons, going thence to Bussy-le-Château, about twenty-five kilometres out from Châlons, where we took on, temporarily, evacuation work for a large hospital.

After ten days we received orders that we would be attached shortly to the 20th Division, Fourth Army — one of the best — and be sent up into action. At this time Henry Iselin became *Chef*. Although a young man, he had seen long service, and quickly won the respect and admiration of all.

WILLIAM DE FORD BIGELOW<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Cohasset, Massachusetts; Harvard, '00; a member of the Field Service from August, 1916, until its militarization; served as driver and *Chef* in Section Four; later, as Captain, commanded a *parc*; subsequently a Major in the U.S. Army Ambulance Service.

## IV

### VILLERS-MARMERY — MONT CORNILLET

1917

THE personnel of Section Four was largely renewed in the spring of 1917, and a dozen more or less inexperienced men came from the Field Service camp at May-en-Multien, May 9, 1917, to join us at Villers-Marmery, in the Champagne, where we were informed that we were to join the 20th Division, 10th Army Corps, of the Fourth Army. The delight of the Section was unbounded when we heard that we were to be attached to that crack attacking portion of the French Army. Other Sections had tried in vain to get the job, but it took Lieutenant de Turckheim to secure it for us.

We were to take over the work of a French ambulance section, and for that reason the new men of our group were sent first, in order that they might work with experienced drivers, and thus learn the roads, *postes*, etc., under the most favorable circumstances. The next day, on the 10th of May, the second half of our Section moved to Villers-Marmery and took over the work of the French. As soon as we got into camp and had had some lunch, we went to our *postes* to relieve the old *piqueet*. We had French orderlies to show us the way to our *postes*, after which they said farewell and went back to their cantonment on the returning cars, leaving us to our own devices. The assumption was that we were experienced men and could take care of ourselves.

Our front *postes* were at Fossé-aux-Ours, the camp of our *poste de secours* at the *boyau* at the foot of Mont Cornillet, and at Wez, near Thuizy, a little to the left of Mont Cornillet. From Wez we worked a *poste* at the Maisonneuve, a small railroad crossing in the midst of a swamp not far from Prunay. The *poste* at the *boyau* was

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a little bridge that crossed an old trench. There was just room to crawl in on your hands and knees and lie down. It was a draughty, damp, uncomfortable hole. The approach to this *poste* was over a plain which lay under observation by the Boches from a hill back of Cornillet and somewhat to the left. The road was heavily screened but we had to drive slowly so as not to raise a dust, which would rise above the screen and warn the Boches that the road was being used. Here the road was for the most part very good, just the opposite of the road from Wez to the Maisonneuve, which ran through a swamp. Around Fossé-aux-Ours and the *boyau*, where the batteries abounded, the Germans did comparatively little shelling, and at the Maisonneuve, where the French batteries were less active, the Boches kept up quite a shell display. The road was cut to pieces and the swampy soil made travelling most difficult. One afternoon two of the fellows timed the *arrivées* and in two hours the Boches threw in eight hundred shells. The Maisonneuve *poste* was in a log *abri* not far from a railroad. All this railroad needed to fix it up was a new roadbed, new ties, new rails, and a new crossing. In time the road from Wez became so bad that we drove to the Maisonneuve only on call. Besides these *postes*, we had a car stationed at Livry-sur-Vesle at the *Direction du Service de Santé*. Here a fellow could get a good rest for twenty-four hours and, if he were fortunate, a little taxi service for the *Médecin Divisionnaire*.

While in the Champagne we did no evacuation work (that is, carrying the *blessés* from the *triage* or sorting hospitals to other hospitals). We carried our *blessés* to the *triage* in Villers-Marmery and S.S.U. 13 did our evacuation work. The peculiar thing is that in all our front work we had no casualties, while Section Thirteen, working back, had three of its members, its lieutenant and two drivers, meet an *obus* and come out second best. *C'est la guerre!*

On the 12th of May the French began to rush up a lot of their zouaves, and Madagascar and Senegalese negroes

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to join the 19th Division, stationed on Mont Blanc, at the immediate right of our Division. While the troops moved forward, the French cannon quieted down a bit, so as not to draw too much of the hostile fire on the batteries that skirted the roads. This did not prevent the Boches from throwing shrapnel over the road, however.

### THE ATTACK IN CHAMPAGNE

ON the 20th of May our whole Section was ordered out for the attack about to start. We sent fourteen ambulances to Fossé-aux-Ours and four or five to Wez. The attack by the 19th Division was to begin at noon. From about 8.30 on, the French batteries let loose. It was like a giant corn-popper. At noon the troops advanced. Looking through a break in the woods, we could see the splendid troops go up the hill, wave after wave, to get the Boches. Before the attack the French had held one side of the range, the Germans the other side. Three times before had the French attacked and failed. The Boches had held their positions from shell-holes and concrete machine-gun emplacements. Three times the French had been unable to maintain the ground they had gained. This was the fourth attempt, and they were determined to succeed. The 20th Division attacked at the same time as the 19th, and succeed they did, but the decision was close.

The wounded began to come in about eight o'clock in the evening. We were kept quite busy, but less so than we had feared. Most of the wounded had fallen in No Man's Land, and as soon as the fever of the attack had cooled down, the Boches turned their machine-guns on those *blessés*, and there they died, French and German. The only ones we carried were those who had fallen in and near the trenches.

The next day the authorities started to withdraw the negroes and send them to the rear. They are wonderful men for attacking, but do not stand up well under the hammering of counter-attacks. On the 25th of May our

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Division moved out of the trenches and went back *en repos*. They had been in the trenches, attacking, for a month and they were about "all in." On the 26th we followed our Division *en repos*, turning over the work to the French Section that came to relieve us.

We went under tents at Rouffy, a little village about midway between Châlons and Epernay. The Section remained there from May 26 to June 15, overhauling cars, washing, scrubbing, sweating, loafing, playing, entertaining the Frenchmen and getting acquainted with them. We had been too busy at Villers-Marmery to become acquainted with our allies, and now was our chance! On the 15th of June we followed our Division to Verdun, making our home in an old hospital at Baleycourt.

LEON H. BUCKLER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Rochester, N.Y.; a member of Section Four from December, 1916, until the Service was taken over by the U.S. Army. Subsequently a Sergeant in the U.S.A. Ambulance Service. Died of pneumonia at the front on September 23, 1918.



## V

## THE VERDUN ATTACK OF AUGUST, 1917

JULY 28, 1917, will long be remembered by us, for in the night a most violent explosion, several miles beyond Verdun, broke nearly all the windows of our quarters and served as a good prelude to the Boche air raids which were to come later. At this time the *postes d'évacuation* were at Bras and Montgrignon and the *triage* in Verdun. This latter, however, was changed on August 5, to Gloriegux, and the Section did both *évacuation* and *triage* work, which was not hard at this time, but which became increasingly difficult with the moving-up of artillery and troops in preparation for the great offensive. Enormous guns were placed on each side of our camp at Baleycourt, and though they were well concealed, within one hour after they had fired the first shot the Germans replied, their shells landing in a field in close proximity to our guns and camp. In addition to a daily bombardment, the Boche aviators came nearly every night to bomb, so that a good *abri* was a necessity. Such a one was made and resorted to about every night until after the battle, which broke forth in all its fury on August 20.

During the entire period of that terrible night, the enemy maintained a firm reply to the fierce *barrage* of the French artillery, with the result that daylight uncovered a series of ghastly scenes along the road to Bras. But nothing dampened our spirits as we worked that fine, clear day, while report after report brought news of splendid French successes. By noon, all the objectives had been attained, while the transportation of the wounded proceeded smoothly. In the afternoon, however, the work threatened to become messed up, for the reserve ambulances, which had been hidden behind a *camouflage* at Petit Bras, found themselves forced to fly in haste, the

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enemy concentrating their shelling for half an hour on that spot.

Soon the increasing number of wounded crowded the *poste* at Bras, and a temporary one was established up about halfway from Bras to Vacherauville. But the next morning, after a further advance of the French troops, this *poste* was abandoned, and the ambulances began to work as far forward as Vacherauville. That day a still further advance *poste* was established at a place called La Cage, but after a few attempts to run to it, the impracticability of the venture was manifest.

For three days and nights Section Four worked with Section Eighteen in transporting wounded from Bras and Vacherauville to the *triage* at Glorieux.

On Tuesday night of the attack, after Evans had left Bras with a load of *blessés*, a shell exploded near his machine, wounding him in the arm and inflicting new wounds on two of his already badly wounded *couchés*. A curious incident happened in connection with this—an *éclat* of the shell hit the gasoline cock, shutting off the supply of gas, so that the machine ran about a hundred yards and then stopped. Thereupon Evans's *blessés* were taken to Glorieux, while he went to Montgrignon, where his wound was dressed.

### AEROPLANE BOMBS — WOUNDED AND KILLED

THIS event was followed by one still sadder for the Section. In the night of August 22, a German aviator dropped a bomb which struck about ten paces from our quarters, wounding three men, our French *brigadier* Berger and drivers Shreve and Greenhalgh. Berger was so grievously injured that he died a few days later and now sleeps with hundreds of others in the cemetery of Glorieux, others who like him are *morts pour la France*.

Finally the bombing became so bad at Baleycourt that we were ordered to leave and take new quarters at Glorieux, the change being made on the last day of August, which did not prevent us from keeping one am-



THE G.B.D. "POSTE" AT BRAS ABOVE VERDUN



"POSTE" AT VACHERAUVILLE ON AUGUST 21, 1917, WHEN  
THE FRENCH ADVANCED



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bulance always on duty at the Verdun citadel, bombarded every day by the Germans.

### OCTOBER, 1917 — LAST DAYS OF SECTION FOUR

THE last work done by Section Four while still a part of the American Field Service was difficult — indeed, about as hard as that done during the French offensive in August. Cold fall rains set in during the first day of October, and in addition to working the *postes* mentioned above, there were frequent calls to Équarrissage and Charny, coupled with long runs to Fleury and Souilly, all of which made the work increasingly severe. Cases of trench feet increased in proportion to the rain, and with four sections evacuating from front *postes* to the Glorieux *triage*, our days on duty there became very hard and trying with small Fords and thirty-kilometre runs. But these were not all our trials. Members of the Section will remember during this period the frequent gas attacks made by the Germans on the French batteries between Vacherauville and Bras, and the difficulty of driving through the gas at night wearing a gas-mask. Several of us were gassed. Finally, having served in the Verdun sector continuously since June, and outlived there five other sections, Section Four was relieved on October 22, 1917, and given a rest which it had richly earned, and its last month's work closed in a fitting manner a long and honorable career as a member of the American Field Service. How honorable this career was is best illustrated, perhaps, by the fact that when the Section was finally relieved, Lieutenant de Turckheim, its French Commander, received four *Croix de Guerres* "to be given to four of the most deserving members." "But I returned them," states that officer, "saying that all had done so well that it would be unfair to pick out any four."

CHARLES H. HUNKINS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Providence, Rhode Island; Dartmouth and the University of Paris; joined the Field Service in June, 1917; subsequently served with the Military Censorship Department, United States Army.

## VI

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

SECTION FOUR lost its identity as a Field Service Section during September of 1917. It was then that the remnant of its old personnel officially enlisted, and became new Section 627. The Section was *en repos* at the time in a little village by the name of Villers-le-Sec which is situated about forty kilometres to the northwest of Bar-le-Duc. Along about the middle of October we moved back to the front in the Verdun sector. We had our quarters in the small village of Sommedieu, where we were destined to spend the winter of 1917-18. We did not leave this sector, which was remarkably quiet during our stay, until about the 1st of March. During all this time we were serving the famous 20th Division of French Infantry which hailed from the coast of Normandy. In this sector we had only two front *postes* which, in reality, were not front *postes* at all.

The 1st of March, 1918, saw us *en repos* at Pierrefitte, a sizable village in the valley of the Meuse. After a few days we were detached from our Division, which was to be broken up and sent in to strengthen various parts of the line in preparation for the coming Boche spring offensive. We moved to Ravigny, which is only the name of a patch of woods to the east of Souilly. The Section had been with the 20th Division for over a year, and so it was hard for us to part with these old friends of ours. Also we lost our wonderful French Lieutenant, the Baron de Turckheim. While we were at Ravigny the first Boche attack broke out which almost resulted in the taking of Amiens. Suddenly we got orders to move. Then began our tour of France. We made the voyage all the way from the valley of the Meuse to the sea, then back again to Doullens. There we stayed for a short time, doing the drudgery of evacuation work for the Tenth Army. The Boche again attacked, this time on the Chemin des Dames, and we were ordered south to replace a French Section which had been badly handled during the retreat. We were with the 1st French Division of Infantry, at whose head was General Grégoire aided by General Duvais. We went into action in the Forest of Villers-Cotterets, just to the northwest of that famous town.

That sector was what one would call "hot." We had two main front *postes* working back through a G.B.D. *poste* and

## SECTION FOUR

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then to the *Hôpitaux d'Évacuation*, which were situated in almost every little village behind us. Our first attack was that made upon the Ferme de Chavigny. During a period of about a month and a half, half the Section worked one day and the other half worked the next. The work was very difficult, for the traffic was terrible, and to add to the amusement, the Boches made out rather well with their shelling. After the *coup de main* on the Ferme de Chavigny, we were ordered *en repos* again, where we stayed the long time of one day and a half. Then we were ordered back for the ever-famous attack of July 18. Our Division went over in the first line of assault, helped out by tanks. We advanced steadily, and as our front progressed, we passed with it up through Longpont to our old stamping-grounds at Villers-Hélon, Blancy, Saint-Remy, and le Plessier-Huleu. The hottest spot was le Plessier-Huleu. There many of the men had to drive through almost a *barrage* to get to the *poste*, which was supposed to exist in the above-mentioned village. Our poor old division was finally pulled out of the line and we went *en repos* in a little village to the west of that famous old pile, Pierrefonds. There we stayed for a few weeks, and then we began our second trip across France, going this time in the opposite direction, and finally finishing up in the valley of Thann — to be specific, the village of Ranspach in *Alsace Reconquise*.

It was here we had to report the deaths of three of the finest men in the Section. Sergeant Buckler, Phil Winsor, and the French mechanic who really had no right to be in the war at all. They died of influenza and were buried in the Vosges Mountains; Sergeant Buckler and the French mechanic in the military cemetery at Urbès, and Philip Winsor in the cemetery of Bussang, with all the honors, such as they are, of war.

We were all glad when about the 1st of November we started on another trip which saw our Division first in Belfort, then near Nancy. At Darney we first began to hear rumors of an armistice, and the 11th of November saw us just south of Nancy, ready to go in when General Mangin was to begin his great attack in Lorraine. At Darney the Section received its citation for the work it did during the attack at Villers-Cotterets.

Then began our march to the Rhine, one of the hardest trips we ever had. We crossed the old line near Château Salins; then went up through the valley of the Sarre, stopping at Saarbrücken, Kircheim Bolendon, and so on to Mayence where we saw Generals Fayolle and Mangin enter the city in triumph. We then went on to Grosse Gerau, where we stayed for the

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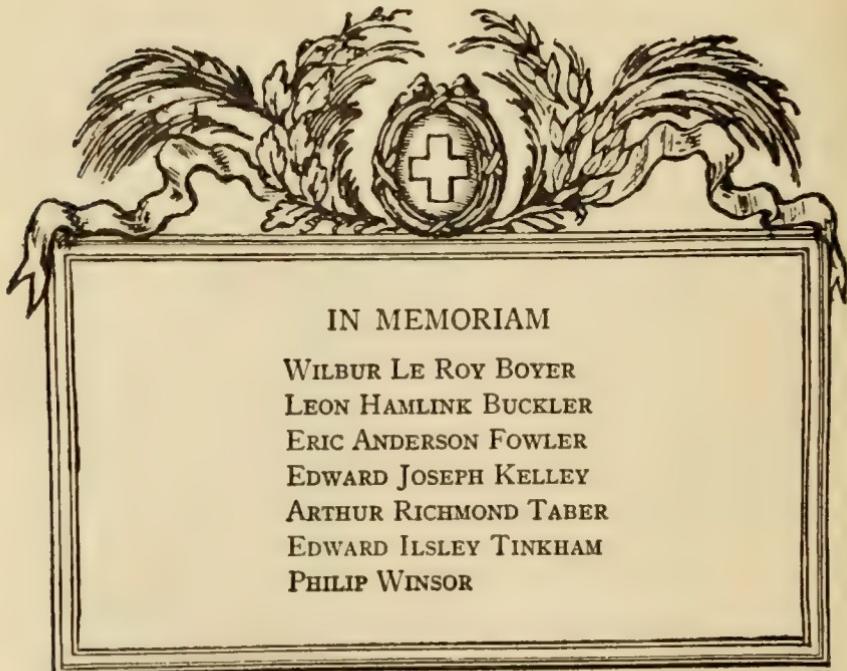
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winter. Our work in Germany could not be called hard or difficult. We did quite a good deal of evacuation work from the old prison camp of Darmstadt — the name of the camp itself being Barackenlager.

At Grosse Gerau we stayed until we were ordered to report to Paris *en route* for the United States in February, 1919.

HUGH J. KELLEHER<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard, '18; joined the Field Service in January, 1917, and served at various times in Sections 12, 3, and 4; with the U.S.A. Ambulance Service after the incorporation of the Field Service in the U.S. Army.



### IN MEMORIAM

WILBUR LE ROY BOYER  
LEON HAMLINK BUCKLER  
ERIC ANDERSON FOWLER  
EDWARD JOSEPH KELLEY  
ARTHUR RICHMOND TABER  
EDWARD ILSLEY TINKHAM  
PHILIP WINSOR

## *Section Eight*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. WILLIAM B. SEABROOK
- II. MALBONE H. BIRCKHEAD
- III. GRENVILLE TEMPLE KEOGH
- IV. CHARLES LAW WATKINS
- V. AUSTIN B. MASON
- VI. HARRY L. DUNN

## SUMMARY

SECTION EIGHT left Versailles on May 25, 1916, going directly to Champagne in the Mourmelon sector. It remained there but a few days when it moved on to Dugny for the great battle of Verdun. It next served in the region of Les Éparges. Reward came in the form of an extended *repos* in the Moselle region, followed by a long journey to the Somme where it spent part of the winter of 1916-17. From there it went to the Meuse, thence to Sainte-Ménehould and the Argonne in the early spring of 1917. In April of the same year the Section went again to Verdun. From there it moved to Champagne, remaining until August, then returning once more to Sainte-Ménehould. It was while here that Eight was taken over by the Army in the autumn of 1917, as Section Six-Twenty-Eight of the U.S.A. Ambulance Service.



## Section Eight<sup>1</sup>

In weariness and worry and mischance  
Remember the long fortitude of France,  
And write in deeds your country's true romance.

JEFFERSON B. FLETCHER

### I

#### THE BEGINNING

IT was about the first of May that our Section assembled in the General Headquarters at Neuilly-sur-Seine. The men were ready, but the cars were not. The *chassis* were standing in line in Kellner's great *carrosserie* works, near Sèvres, a couple of miles beyond the Bois de Boulogne, awaiting the construction of the wooden bodies which were only half completed. Kellner was short of men, and we went to Kellner's. Within twenty-four hours men among us who had never swung anything heavier than a

<sup>1</sup> The numbers attributed by the French Army Automobile Service to the ambulance sections of the American Field Service were not always consecutive. Thus, while the numbers run from one to seventy-two, this Service really embraced but thirty-three separate sections. The intervening numbers were given to other formations provided either by the French or other countries. In general, the numbers were assigned chronologically according as new sections were provided. In some later instances, however, Field Service sections received numbers originally borne by the French Army sections, which they replaced.

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mashie were working at forge and anvil, making heavy iron braces and hinges; others drilled holes in the wood and iron; still others screwed and riveted the parts together. The sturdy women, who were working by hundreds in place of men who had gone to the front, stopped building bomb-cases and handling heavy tools to watch us for an instant from time to time, and bring us little sprigs of lily-of-the-valley, "*le muguet qui porte bonheur.*" The French carpenters became our friends and frequently invited us to share the coarse bread and red wine which they kept loose in the same box with their tools, by way of refreshment between meals.

In eight days we had completed the work, and in another twenty-four hours a squad switched to the paint shops and covered the cars with the official battleship-gray. On Saturday, May 20, moving pictures were taken of the Section at work in the shops, and on Sunday morning, May 21, the twenty cars were standing in line in front of the hospital at Neuilly, completely equipped and ready for the field.

Among the men of our Section who worked as laborers and mechanics at Kellner's were many who had never handled tools before — the Section included professional men, business men, university students, Rhodes scholars, a minister of the Gospel, a winner of golf tournaments, and even a dramatic and musical critic. Indeed, our metamorphosis seemed a slight thing when some of us learned that in the great historic porcelain works of Sèvres immediately across the river all art had ceased for the time being, and the men whose brains and hands had only a short time before been engaged in designing plates and vases of marvellous grace and beauty were now one and all occupied solely with the rude labor of constructing immense rough earthenware jars and acid-containers used in the manufacture of high explosives.

No matter what experiences may come to us later, we shall never forget those days — the early morning rides from Neuilly through the Bois, the trees in leaf and

## SECTION EIGHT

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flower, the silent lakes with here and there a single swan — a splotch of white on the black surface of the water beneath tall cypress groves; perfect beauty, perfect peace.

*Châlons-sur-Marne, May 25, 1916*

WE started this morning from Versailles. On the way here we began to see wooden crosses dotting the fields by the roadside, sometimes a single grave, sometimes a cluster, sometimes a field full of them. Each cross is made from an upright piece of pine sapling about five feet high, with a cross-piece of the same wood about three feet in length, the bark still on, and the name, when there is a name, inscribed on a small board nailed to the centre. Some of the crosses stood over barren mounds; other mounds were covered with flowers; but beneath them all, marked or nameless, lie men who died to save France.

*Mourmelon-le-Grand, May 26*

FROM Châlons we came on to this village situated in the plains of Champagne about twenty-five kilometres southwest of Reims and about nine kilometres behind the trenches. This is to be our headquarters as long as the 6th Army Corps, of which we are a part, remains in this sector.

*May 27*

TO-DAY Section Eight received its baptism of fire. Three cars were called to Saint-Hilaire, our evacuation *poste* eight kilometres from Mourmelon and about two and a half kilometres behind the first-line trenches. We arrived there under a German bombardment. "They are not firing at us," explained the French sergeant on duty there, at the entrance to his dugout and smoking a pipe, while a half-dozen of his stretcher-bearers were sitting around under the trees; "but a shell timed a fraction of a second earlier, or fired a fraction of a centimetre lower, might land here by accident; so we had better get our *blessés* loaded and away." Scarcely had the sergeant ceased

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speaking when the shells began to fly about us. By the way, descriptions of how one feels under shell-fire are always inadequate because every man feels differently; but close observation, on this and subsequent occasions, of the men of our Section, seems to show that they are alike in only one respect — they all hold their ground.

*May 29*

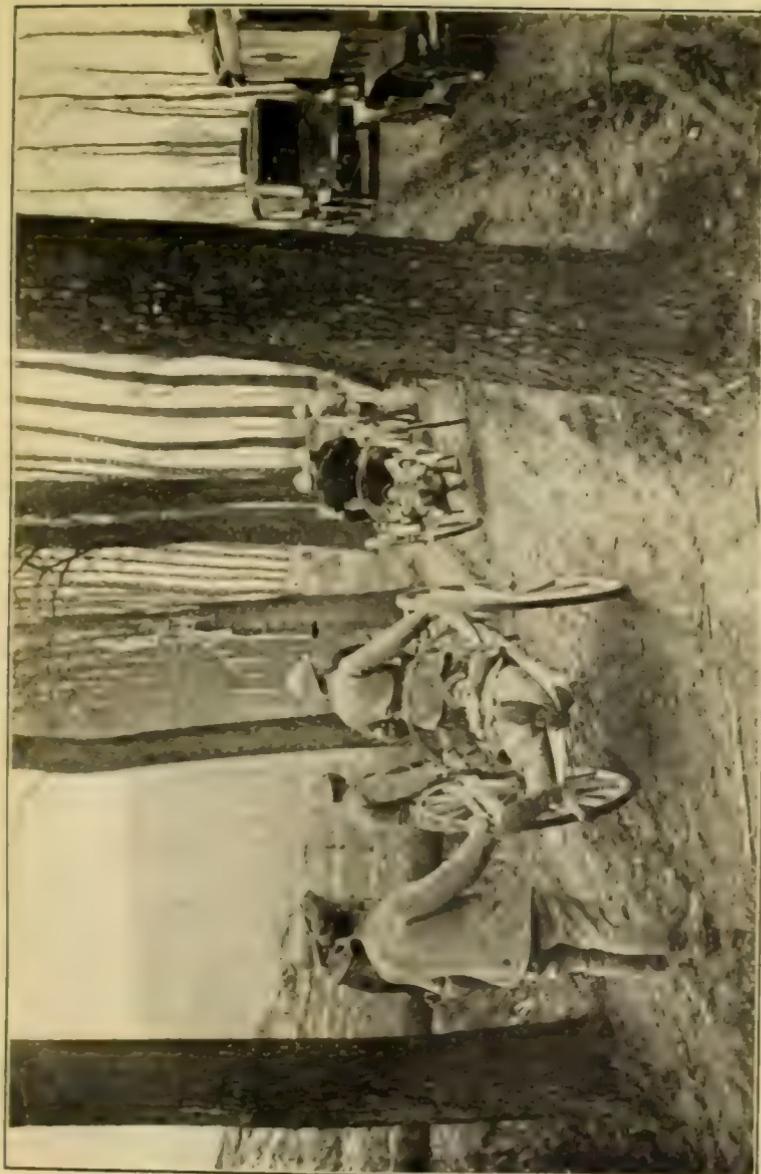
CALM follows storm on an artillery front, as we discovered on one of the quiet mornings recently when an officer consented to show us the batteries in the woods behind the evacuation *poste*. Though many of the guns were quite close by, they were so skilfully screened by trees and brush-heaps that we could never have found them without a guide. Birds were singing, the trees glistening from a flurry of rain, while the sun was again breaking through the leaves around the now silent monsters of destruction.

We surprised the Lieutenant of the nearest battery engaged, like Candide, in cultivating his garden. He had cleared a tiny spot, a few yards wide, facing the entrance of his bomb-proof dugout, and had planted lettuce and radishes, with rows of flowers between the vegetable beds. He had even built a little wooden bench where he could sit and smoke his pipe and dream of his real vegetable garden in Provence. One of his men was darning socks; another was mending a shirt; a boy who looked scarcely more than twenty was amusing himself tossing bits of bread to a puppy; while others were reading books or laughing over last week's funny papers from Paris. "So you find an opportunity to enjoy life even here," one of us remarked to a grizzled veteran, who, with a smile that was half a sigh, responded: "*Mais il le faut, on est tué si vite.*"

### FROM MOURMELON TO LA VEUVE — EN REPOS

*La Veuve, June 2*

A FORMAL order came to our Section yesterday instructing us to leave Mourmelon at 2 A.M. and repair to the



STRETCHERS SLUNG BETWEEN TWO WHEELS ON THEIR WAY FROM THE TRENCHES



## SECTION EIGHT

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stable and back yard of the Widow Cueux, in this village where we are now billeted. We filed out of Mourmelon in the darkness, running without lights, but by 2.30 the dawn was red and it was broad daylight at 3 A.M., when we got here, turned down a narrow side street, found the Widow Cueux's house and parked our cars under the sycamore trees. It is true that this village is squalid; it is true that the mayor had to order the removal of large quantities of stable manure from the Widow Cueux's premises before its barn doors opened to receive us; it is true that a score of our own huskiest lads had to work with shovel and wheelbarrow to make the yard habitable; but the squalor of La Veuve has its picturesque qualities, nevertheless. It straggles along the main road from Châlons to Reims just where the Mourmelon route branches off. And the very thought of Reims lying at the far end of this same street lends romance to the humble town.

June 3

THIS morning the *poilus* who are *en repos* in this village introduced us to the corporal who has "sixteen bullets in his blanket, but not a scratch on his skin." He proudly exhibited the blanket and told us how the *poilus*, when all patent armour devices and bullet-proof jackets had failed to deflect the German rifle-fire, had themselves invented, or rather discovered, the unknown buffer that no rifle bullet can pierce. They take their own heavy sleeping-blankets, soak them in water, and then roll two or three of them in a tight wad, sometimes putting a knapsack in the centre of the roll to make it thicker. Crawling along on their bellies, pushing the wad of blankets foot by foot in front of them, it affords just enough cover to protect them from horizontal rifle-fire. The high velocity bullets, which neither wood nor steel can turn, sink into the soft, soggy, woollen roll and die there, harmless as eggs in a nest. Many another trick the *poilus* have learned in order to save their skins, but none so efficient as this roll of wet blankets.

## TAKING STOCK OF OURSELVES AND NEIGHBORS

June 10

OUR ten days here with the soldiers of our Division, quartered at La Veuve and in neighboring villages, have given us a splendid opportunity to take stock of ourselves and also to learn something of the men with whom we shall be associated for the next few months. We are the official ambulance section of the 12th Division of the 6th Corps of the Fourth Army. Our Division is composed of four regiments of about three thousand each, totalling in all some twelve thousand men. We are as much a part of the Division as if we were all born Frenchmen. Our rations are furnished by the army; we are under army regulations; billeted in our sleeping quarters by the army; each of us receives five sous per day, the regular pay of the *poilu*; and each of us receives his army ration of pipe-tobacco every ten days. Back in Paris the Field Service furnished us a list of things which we ought to have; but all this would have been as appropriate for a hard auto-camping trip across the American continent in time of peace as it is for our present purposes here. On the first day of our arrival at the front, the army added two items for each of us more important than all the rest, namely, one regulation steel *casque* and one regulation gas-mask. So here we are, *poilus* and comrades like the rest, by these two tokens, and by the aluminum numbered identification tags which we wear on a chain around our wrists.

June 11

THE regiment which we have learned to know best is the 67th, as it is quartered in La Veuve. It has been one of the hardest hit by the war; thirty thousand men have passed through it during the past sixteen months. As they marched by in closed ranks at a review the other day, we could recognize many faces of new-made friends. How many of them, we wonder, will be left "*là-bas*" in the

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next attack; how many will be brought back bleeding and broken in our "*belles petites voitures*," which they have gathered around so often in the evening to admire.

We were merely spectators at the review. An hour later our new Commander, General Giraudon, left his limousine, left his prancing steed, left his general staff, and came down the alley on foot through the mud to our barn-yard, accompanied only by an orderly, to "review" his new "*section sanitaire*." As we are all under military regulations, we scarcely dared to blink an eyelid as we stood stiffly beside our cars on his arrival. The General walked along the line and stopped before Boyd. We had been given our instructions to stand at attention and not salute while under inspection; so Boyd stood like a statue, until it became unmistakably evident that the General intended speaking to him. Boyd's hand then started toward his cap in a salute that was never finished. Those of us up the line never will know exactly what happened in that embarrassing half-second; but an instant later the General and Boyd were shaking hands in good American fashion, while words escaped Boyd's lips which sounded suspiciously like "How are you?" The ice was broken, and when the General left he told us he was proud to have an American section in his division.

Our only duties while *en repos* here have been to transport occasional sick men in the Division. Most of our time off duty has been spent exchanging visits and souvenirs with the *poilus* of the 67th, who have been very much taken with the American songs. Every evening they gather in a ring before the cars to hear Armour, Jacobs, and the other musical members of the Section singing to the accompaniment of mandolin and guitars. One night they decided it would be appropriate for them to exchange courtesies, and they invited the Section to the sleeping-quarters of one of the companies in a neighboring barn, where wine and cakes were served in the straw, and *chansons de guerre* were sung.

BRABANT-LE-ROI — DUGNY — VERDUN

*Brabant-le-Roi, June 12*

FIFTY kilometres we came in cold and rain, and here we are, quartered for three days in a huge stock-farm barn with Verdun fifty-five kilometres farther north. But we are still too far away to hear the guns.

*June 13*

STILL at Brabant-le-Roi.

It was among the ruins of one of the little villages in the Marne that Charlie Faulkner encountered and made friends with a fluffy-haired puppy of mongrel breed in which the setter seemed to predominate, and straightway adopted him as the mascot of Section Eight. After the puppy was washed and as many of the fleas removed from his hide as possible, the problem of a name presented itself. Some one suggested the name of "Pinard," which is war-time slang for the red wine furnished the men in the trenches, and the soldiers found both the dog and the name so droll that Pinard became not only the mascot of our American Section, but the joke and the pet of the whole French Division. Some of the boys of the Section who are not very strong on French, have anglicized Pinard's name and call him "Peanut."

*Dugny, June 21*

THIS village is four kilometres behind the city of Verdun. Here we have been with our Division since the 18th inst. We will remain here for perhaps a fortnight longer, when we will be sent back *en repos* and replaced by a new Division. Three weeks is about the limit of human endurance. For four nerve-racking days and nights our little cars have been climbing to the citadel of Verdun, turning to the right and going into the hills among the batteries and bursting shells, to a *poste de secours* in the Fort of Tavannes, less than two kilometres behind Vaux and the first-line trenches. The road by which we pass is shelled

## SECTION EIGHT

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day and night. Ambulance drivers have been killed and wounded in the sections which preceded us. We have seen men mangled by shells bursting a few yards away in front of us while we have escaped. We have driven our cars over the bodies of dying horses. Three of our cars have been pierced by shrapnel and shell fragments. Yet not a man among us has been touched. Lack of sleep, the continued noise of artillery, bad drinking-water and the attendant dysentery have put our nerves on edge; but we are doing the work, and the one thought in the minds of all of us, when we are not too worn out to think at all, is that, come what may, we are going to stick it out.

It is hard to write about — this Verdun service. Those of us who used to laugh at danger have stopped laughing. Those of us who used to turn pale have got the same set look about the jaws and eyes as the rest, but we no longer change color. We don't come back any longer and tell each other with excited interest how close to our car this or that shell burst — it is sufficient that we come back.

June 22

THE hundred and sixty *brancardiers*, or stretcher-bearers, of our Division had to be transported from Houdainville, near Dugny, to Fort Tavannes, and the duty fell to us. Each car made about four trips by night during a period of thirty-six hours, in the midst of conditions like those described in my last entry. It was inevitable that some of our cars and some of our men would be touched. Three of our twenty cars were *en panne*, and the other seventeen were doing the work supposed normally to be done by two sections totalling forty cars. It was during this time of stress that we also evacuated 540 wounded from Tavannes Fort to Dugny, a distance of fifteen kilometres each way, in twenty-four hours, making the record of the war, so far, for that particular *poste*, and for that specified length of time.

# THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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## RIDDLED WITH ÉCLATS

June 23

NIGHT before last Davison<sup>1</sup> answered a midnight Tavannes call and had his car pierced through and through with shell fragments as he was entering the fort. The next morning, as I was leaving the fort with a load of wounded, my car was struck in the same way. Both Davison and I were untouched, but one of the wounded men in my car was hit in the side by a small fragment. In the afternoon, Rogers,<sup>2</sup> lying on the grass near our dining-tent, received a slight surface wound in the leg from a stray piece of shell. Yesterday morning the entrance tunnel of the same fort was caved in by German "380" high-explosive shells. Rogers, Faulkner, Boyd, and MacMonagle<sup>3</sup> were in the fort at the time and escaped, by a miracle, with their lives. They were hurled to the ground by the concussion. The place is no longer tenable as a *poste de secours* and so is to be abandoned. While we are not afraid to go there, we are glad to leave, for the underground, vaulted tunnels of that fort composed a chamber of horrors which we remember in our dreams. The floors were mud, the ceiling slimy-dripping stone; and the light was scant, while the wounded were so numerous that we had to step over their prostrate bodies; and to add to it all, the stench was horrible.

*Cabaret Rouge, June 24*

TO-DAY this picturesquely named place became our regular *poste de secours*. There is a diabolical fitness about the name. The house, which is halfway up the slope in a val-

<sup>1</sup> Alden Davison, of New York City; Yale, '19; joined the Field Service in February, 1916, serving with Section Eight until September; entered the U.S. Aviation Service, and was killed in training December 26, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> Randolph Rogers, of Grand Rapids, Michigan; served with Section Eight of the Field Service from April to September, 1916; subsequently enlisted in the U.S. Infantry, becoming a Sergeant; he was killed in action on the Marne, July 15, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas MacMonagle, previously in Section Three; killed while in French Aviation, September 24, 1918, near Verdun in aerial combat.

## SECTION EIGHT

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ley, is simply surrounded by the French batteries, while German shells are continually bursting in the fields around. Red signal rockets illumine the sky. Down from the trenches come the stretcher-bearers with their crimson burdens. Red Cabaret, red rockets, red fire, red blood!

*June 26*

THE Germans keep shelling the road. On the night of the 23d, Charlie Faulkner, volunteering to drive a car, had the metal part of the searchlight smashed by a shell. The next night, Keogh, the laughing, brave-hearted boy we love perhaps most of all, came walking back with his arm streaming blood, and last night I was nearly finished off by a gas attack, but was saved by Faulkner.

### SECTION ONE FOR NEIGHBORS

*June 28*

TO-DAY the French ambulance section was replaced by our Section One, so that we now have two American sections, parked side by side here, with forty cars doing the work that we originally had had to do with seventeen cars. Yesterday, Charlie Faulkner saved a French soldier from drowning in the swift current of the Meuse where we often go to swim. He went in and got him, having to swim against the current and go twice to the bottom. The Frenchmen were filled with gratitude and admiration. "We can't swim like Americans," was one of their repeated comments. Then Faulkner leaped on a bareback horse, galloped across the marshes to Dugny for a doctor and an ambulance, and soon the little Ford came tearing along in best three-reel-thriller style with Faulkner on the seat. We all began laughing and wondered if he had the horse inside.

*July 1*

THE chief medical officers of the Division tell us that our little cars are doing great work. We are glad, for we have been doing the best we can, and, without knowing it, we seem to have established some new records in this sector.

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Thus, on our "best day," June 22, in thirty-four hours we transported 555 wounded from Tavannes and Cabaret to Dugny, an average distance per round trip of 25 kilometres. The work was done by 19 cars, the total 19 making an aggregate distance of 1339 kilometres loaded, and 1359 kilometres empty, or an average of about 142 kilometres per car. Practically all the work was done under shell-fire. Armour made the best individual record, totalling four trips to Tavannes and five to Cabaret, carrying a total of 51 wounded.

*July 7*

OUR work has been growing lighter so that we were able to let half of our men go up to Paris to celebrate "the glorious Fourth." When they came back we had a pleasant surprise for them. Section Eight had left Dugny and had gone in convoy to Ancerville, a lovely village fully eighty kilometres behind the lines, out of sound of the guns.

### THE GLORIOUS FOURTH — AND FOURTEENTH

*Ancerville, July 15*

YESTERDAY was celebrated the French national *fête*. We joined heart and soul with our friends of the Division in celebrating it. The *Section Américaine* was featured on the programme as the "*grande attraction*," and consisted of mandolin and guitar music by Armour and Jacobs, followed by a boxing bout between Jacobs and MacMonagle, and another bout between Buffum and Armour. The applause was generous and sincere. That night there was a torchlight procession through the village in which our boys carried lanterns, marching and singing, side by side, and arm in arm with the *poilus*.

### BACK TO CABARET ROUGE

*Dugny, July 18*

EARLY yesterday morning we left our Division to go back to Dugny. It was a real chagrin for us. Early as it was,

## SECTION EIGHT

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scores of our personal friends in the Division came to bid us good-bye. Our work is to be the same as before. In fact we had n't been here five minutes when an orderly came with his little square scrap of paper: "Two cars quick to the Cabaret Rouge." The people of Dugny remembered us and seemed to be glad to see us again — especially the little woman who still makes "*café chaud à toute heure.*" We brought her a dozen glasses, which she needed, and some shirts from Paris for her little boy.

*July 23*

THE day after our arrival there was consternation in the Section. Pinard was missing. He came on Armour's car from Ancerville to Dugny, and had been seen frolicking around the street. But on the evening of our arrival a big German shell burst near us and Pinard was seen no more. We did n't seriously believe he had been struck by the shell, but he had nevertheless completely disappeared. Armour found it necessary to return for a day to Ancerville, and there, exhausted and asleep in the straw of the deserted house where we had slept, he discovered Pinard, lonely, miserable, lost. He brought him back in triumph and there was joy at his return.

*July 25*

THE troops in our sector are now taking many German prisoners, and we are all avid for German souvenirs, and so are the *poilus*. Sometimes the prisoners are willing to let us take their little red-banded vizorless caps, provided we give them some kind of head covering in exchange. But we have never seen an American or Frenchman either take a cap from a German without asking it and unless the owner was willing.

*July 26*

A QUEER story came to us a couple of nights ago about the German wireless message, said to have been picked up by a French station over on the other side of Verdun near

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Mort Homme. Rumor said the message was from the German General Staff, announcing that an American ambulance unit, working the Cabaret Rouge *poste*, had been seen by the German aviators, and that instructions had been given the German gunners not to fire on Cabaret. But just as we were beginning to give serious credence to the tale, word came that fifteen men had been killed and fifty wounded by shells within a few paces of the *poste*; and a few hours afterwards, while Iasigi's car was standing in front of Cabaret, a German "77" landed within five paces of it, luckily doing no damage. No wonder we are now laughing at our own credulity.

July 27

THOUGH the work here as a whole is not so dangerous now as it was in June, some of the men have had rather narrow escapes since we returned. For instance, a piece of shell came through the top of one car yesterday, and Keogh was missed less than two feet by a fragment that struck the seat beside him.

### THE REAL HERO

AND let me close this record with one reflection. The real hero of Verdun and of the war is the *poilu*, or infantry soldier, of the first-line trenches. The destiny of France is in his keeping. The man in the trenches is the essential factor. The rest of us, back here among the batteries and observation points and *postes de secours*, are engaged solely in the work of backing up his efforts. Whether generals, artillerymen, stretcher-bearers, or ambulance drivers, we are here only to protect and serve the men out yonder — preparing the way before him with shell and shrapnel when he advances, and transporting him back, covered with blood and mud and glory, when his work is done.

WILLIAM B. SEABROOK<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Atlanta, Georgia; Newberry College; spent six months in the Field Service during the year 1916 with Section Eight.



SAUCISSE ABOVE VERDUN



## II

### SHELLS AND GAS — THE ROADS OF VERDUN

*In the Hills of France, June 23, 1916*

THEY have given us a very important work as well as a dangerous one — to evacuate the wounded about one and a quarter miles from the first-line trenches in this Verdun sector, and since we have been here — about a week — our little ambulances, holding five wounded, have carried some hundreds of men. We are quartered in Dugny, about four miles away from the front, which the Germans take pleasure in shelling twice a day. We got here a week ago, or Friday, and on Saturday morning I made my first trip, on a French machine, to our *poste de secours*. The first part of the drive is through a valley, where there is a beautiful winding river, and some pretty old towns. Then you begin an ascent for about two miles on a road which is lined with French batteries and quite open to the view of the Germans, who have a large observation balloon only a mile or two away. Consequently the road is fired over all the time; so you feel that a passing shell may at any moment fall on you. Just this morning, about four o'clock, three shells went over my machine and broke in a field near by. When one reaches the top of the ascent, there is a piece of road, very rough, and covered with *débris* of all kinds — dead horses, old carts and wheels, guns, and confusion everywhere. This road leads to an old fort where our wounded are, and on this road the German fire is even worse.

Well, this first morning, just before we arrived, the Germans began a bombardment which lasted five hours. The shells landed all around us, but we finally got in safely. Before this, however, we discovered a small tunnel large enough to hold three of our cars, and here I waited five hours, without any breakfast, hearing the roar of the

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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shells — they made a noise like a loud, prolonged whistle — and then listening to the French batteries answer with a more awful roar, because nearer. To add to the interest, two or three gas-shells exploded near us, which made our eyes water. Luckily we had our gas-masks with us; but we had got the gas in our faces before we could put them on. Meanwhile, the wounded were being carried in from the first-line trenches by the stretcher-bearers, who, by the way, are among the real heroes of this war. Finally the time came for us to go out into the open in order to let the other cars get in after us. We went along slowly but surely, and at last we got down the hill, away from all the noise and danger. It was worth while, though, for we were carrying many wounded with us. For a week we have been doing this work and are still alive; and we have to our credit about 700 *blessés*. The French are, of course, very appreciative of our labor. I may add that I am well in spite of the excitement, but tired to death of the horrors, the smells, and the sights of war. I am glad to have got a taste of real war, though, so as to know what it really means.

MALBONE H. BIRCKHEAD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City; Harvard University; an Episcopal clergyman; served in Section Eight from April to October, 1916. The above is an extract from a letter written to Mr. Birckhead's mother.



### III

Thursday, July 20

THIS morning at 1.30 I left Dugny and went up to Cabaret, where I relieved, with Forbush,<sup>1</sup> who went with me, the two cars which were there. At the time there was a very heavy French attack going on, so our run up was one of the noisiest that I ever made. All along the road the French batteries were firing *tirs de barrage*, and roaring right in our ears. The roads were also very bad with breaking shells, because, naturally, the heavy fire of the French guns called forth much bombarding by the Germans. At Cabaret there were no wounded, and I just had to sit around until 8.30 A.M., when I was relieved by two other cars from our Section. During the first few hours of my wait, I lay down in the straw on the floor of the dugout and tried to get some sleep. This, however, was out of the question, owing to the terrific noise. At about 3 A.M. I got up and just hung around. The day was just beginning to break, and it was a wonderful sight to see the long trains of artillery passing along the brow of the hill directly behind Cabaret, coming in from their night's shift. All around Cabaret were situated French "75" batteries. I went down into the dugout connected with the nearest one of these, and watched it work. It was really a foolish thing to do, for the batteries were being bombarded. However, I thought it too good a chance to miss, and I am now very glad that I did it. The Lieutenant in charge of the battery gave me little plugs to put in my ears, and mica goggles to keep the powder out of my eyes. He also told me that each time that a gun was fired to rise up on my toes. This stops a great deal of the shock to your ear-drums. At about 5 A.M. the sun was bright enough to enable me to take pictures. I got some good views of

<sup>1</sup> Frederic Moore Forbush, of Detroit, Michigan; served with Section Eight of the Field Service from April 26 to October 24, 1916; subsequently in the U.S. Navy; died of pneumonia October 6, 1918.

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the guns in action. The Lieutenant in command did everything he could to enable me to get the best possible positions and exposures.

Friday, July 21

I SLEPT quite late and got up just in time for lunch. During the afternoon worked on my car. At 8 P.M. our Division went again on call and "Doc" Armour and I immediately left for Cabaret, to relieve the two cars of the other division and to stay until 2 A.M. to-morrow morning. On our run up, there was not very much firing done by either side, and it was not until 11 P.M. that the action began. At this hour the Germans launched a very heavy attack on all positions along the line of our sector. The attack lasted for an hour and was immediately followed by the French counter-attack, in which they regained all the ground that they had lost. This French attack, of course, made things very uncomfortable for Doc and me, who had to stay in the dugout behind Cabaret. Cabaret itself simply rocked with the vibration and concussion of the huge guns which were firing all around it. The whole country, as far as we could see, was a mass of flashes from the French light and heavy artillery. The terrific noise was mingled with the crashing of the German shells, which kept continually breaking on the hill just behind Cabaret. Many times they broke so close that our dugout was sprinkled with *éclats* and pieces of stone. At about midnight there were four men carried in from one of the near-by batteries in a horrible condition. A German gun had found the range of this battery, and before it could be moved had killed most of the gun crew and wounded nearly all the rest. The doctor in Cabaret (a surgeon) dressed their wounds there. It looked just like the pictures you see in books of a doctor fixing up the wounded in a little dugout. This doctor did all the dressing on his knees because it was not possible to stand up owing to the lowness of the roof. He had on his helmet, with his gas-mask fastened at his side. During all the

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dressings the French batteries directly outside the door and all around the surrounding hills kept up the steady roar of a *tir de barrage*.

I left Cabaret at 12.30 with my first load, and, as soon as I had delivered them at the hospital, returned, because we were not to be relieved until 2 or 2.30 A.M. On the trip back and forth I had some quite narrow squeaks. Once a shell broke right in the road about twenty yards in front of me, and before I could stop I ran right into the shell-hole, but did n't break the car at all. However, it gave the *blessés* a terrible shaking-up and they all roared to beat the band! A small piece of the same shell chipped one of my front spokes. At 2.15 A.M. the other two cars arrived and I went straight back to Dugny.

Monday, July 24

THIS morning at 2.30 a call came in for two cars at "Berlin." The reason that we call this *poste* "Berlin" is because it is only two hundred yards away from the German trenches. It is a very dangerous run and also a very interesting one. From the *poste* (a little dugout) you can plainly see the men firing their rifles from the shell-holes out on the firing-line. Bill Seabrook and I were the first two on call, and were therefore the ones sent out. When we left Dugny we could easily tell, by the exceptionally heavy firing, that there was an attack going on. The road after we passed Belleray was as bright as day owing to the great number of batteries firing directly over it and to the star-shells with which the sky was thickly dotted. This did not make any difference to us, until after we passed the hill beyond Cabaret. In fact, it was really a great help. When we passed the top of the hill, however, we came into plain sight of the Germans, and this made it very dangerous. We also came into sight of the whole attack, which happened to be taking place around Fleury. It was a magnificent sight to watch. The whole valley was filled with the little puffs of flame from the German and French rifles. We had to run down to

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the Rue de Moulainville which was only three hundred yards away from the lines, and which was therefore very nearly in rifle range. Our *blessés* were all ready, waiting for us in a little dugout which was at the junction of the roads. I for one was very glad that they were ready, because this was my idea of "nowhere to hang out." We got our cars loaded and started back. Bill Seabrook's car, which was just in front of mine coming back, was struck by a number of *éclats*. The woodwork on the back of his car was filled with holes, and one of the *blessés* whom he was carrying was hit again. He himself was not touched. We arrived, back at Dugny again, at 5.45 A.M.

Wednesday, July 26

THIS morning at 1.30 I left Dugny for Cabaret. When I arrived there, there was a terrible *tir de barrage* going on. The noise was absolutely deafening. All the hills around Cabaret were as light as day owing to the flashes of all the guns. Their fire kept up steadily until nearly three o'clock, when it stopped as suddenly as it had begun. However, this was by no means the end of the noise. All this heavy firing enabled the Boches to locate the batteries, and when they once got the range the slaughter began. For an hour and a half they kept pouring enormous shells into all the hillsides. We spent the whole day in an *abri*, and I never spent such an hour and a half in all my life. We did not know at what minute a shell would hit our dugout and smash it to pieces. However, none even as much as touched it, and when the bombardment ceased our work began.

Wounded kept pouring into Cabaret from all sides. They, of course, had had no dressings, and therefore the ones who were badly wounded were in a terrible way. Many of these poor fellows had their arms and legs completely shot off. As quickly as they were dressed, we carried them down to Dugny and then returned to Cabaret again for another load. We kept running back and forth steadily until eight o'clock, when we were relieved by

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Armour and Sortwell.<sup>1</sup> As soon as I arrived at Dugny I tumbled into bed and slept steadily until 2 P.M.

*Monday, August 7*

AT 1.30 A.M. I was pulled out of bed to go to Cabaret. When I left Dugny the firing was very heavy. After I had passed through the woods outside of Verdun, the shells began landing all around the road. The French batteries were roaring and the place was certainly noisy. Just before I got to Cabaret, I was held up by a block of convoy wagons. I jumped out of the car and ran on ahead to see what the trouble was. When I arrived at the cause of the hold-up a sight met my eyes that I will not forget for some time. Lying right in the middle of the road was a wagon all smashed to bits, and beside it four men simply torn to pieces. One had his head just hanging by a shred, while another had his two legs blown off, just below his waist. The other two were just scattered all over the road. I helped with the job of cleaning away the wreckage and carrying what was left of the bodies into our *poste de secours*. I then went back and got my car, and went on up to the *poste*. The bombardment of the roads kept up all the rest of the night. However, I made nine trips back and forth. This kept me going until 11 A.M.

It is now almost sure that we have to leave here the day after to-morrow for a *poste* in the Les Éparges district.

*Tuesday, August 8*

TO-DAY I had my first real experience with *mitrailleuse* fire. This morning at about eleven o'clock a call came in for one car up at an advanced *poste*, to which we had never been before. Fred Forbush was on call, but Mason said that he wanted two men on the car just for safety's sake, so I went along with him. The *poste* was situated fully one hundred and fifty yards in front of Fort

<sup>1</sup> Edward Carter Sortwell, of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard; with the Field Service from April 26, serving in Sections Eight and Three; killed in Salonica in action, November, 1916.

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Tavannes, and was closer to the lines than any to which we have ever been sent. Until we got up to Tavannes, things went along all right, but as soon as we passed the fort and started down the hill in front, things immediately livened up. The whole side of the hill was covered with puffs of white smoke, caused by the breaking of German shells. We got down to our *poste* and picked up our wounded. Just as we were going to start, all the men around us began yelling at us to hurry out of the car and get into a dugout. We did n't have any idea of what was happening until we got into the dugout and heard the rapid-fire guns spattering. We could follow the course of their curtain fire from the door of the dugout. It extended for very nearly a mile. From where we were, we could see it coming closer and closer until it passed right over the dugout, and for about five hundred yards beyond. It looked as if a slight puff of wind was stirring the trees. The steady rain of bullets shook the trees and completely wiped out all the small bushes. Of course, these small bullets could n't penetrate our dugouts, but when we came out after it was all over, we found that one of our front tires had been punctured. We fixed it right there and then came back to Dugny without having anything more happen.

Sunday, August 13

THIS was a "big day" for our Section. To-night the *Médecin Divisionnaire* (a Colonel), a Lieutenant from our *poste de secours*, Walker (*Chef* of Section 2), and his Lieutenant, all came over to our "*Croix de Guerre Dinner*." We had our dining-room out in a big field. We backed all the cars in, around the table. The dinner itself was a big success. After dinner the old *Médecin Divisionnaire* stood up and made a very nice little speech. He surprised us all by decorating MacMonagle with the *Croix de Guerre*. His citation went in about two weeks ago, but we had no idea that he was to be decorated to-night.

In his speech the Colonel thanked us all for coming



"ASSIS" WAITING AT CABARET ROUGE



STRETCHER CASES COMING INTO THE "POSTE" AT  
CABARET, NEAR VERDUN



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over here. He complimented us on the way we went through our big rush at Verdun. He said that it was a wonderful piece of work, and one to be remembered with pride throughout our lifetime.

Tuesday, August 15

THIS morning Section Two of the Field Service, which is doing evacuation work at Petit Monthairon about five miles from here, brought over a baseball team. As there was n't much work for us, nine of us went down and played with them. We beat them 7 to 4.

In the afternoon I had to take a lieutenant to Benoite-Vaux, a little town about six miles from here, and close to the lines. All the roads leading up to it were heavily screened because they were in plain sight of the Germans. They were also being shelled when we were coming back over them. Many shells landed very close to my car, but none close enough to do any damage. One time the lieutenant and I counted twenty-five puffs of smoke, caused by breaking shells, in a radius of half a mile. I arrived back at Belle Hélène at about five o'clock and was immediately sent up with Armour to the *poste* at Les Éparges to get four men who had been very seriously wounded.

We went up and nothing extraordinary happened. However, after we had been at the *poste* for several minutes waiting for our men to be prepared to leave, the Germans loosed a cloud of poison gas. We put on our masks, got our car loaded, and started back, but owing to the way our breath smoked up our goggles we could n't drive. We therefore stopped on the road and waited for the gas to pass. When it was entirely gone we went on. Between the point where we stopped and Belle Hélène we picked up four gas victims, who had forgotten to bring along their masks. We also saw three lying dead beside the road, but did n't stop, because there was nothing that we could do.

Tuesday, August 29

THIS morning I was called out at three to bring a lieutenant of the Medical Corps up to the various batteries in

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this vicinity. One of these trips is always most interesting, because it is just a tour of inspection and you get a chance to see a great deal more than you do when you go to get wounded. We went to all the heavy artillery batteries situated on the hills behind Les Éparges. They were all firing unceasingly when we were there, because it is almost always just at dawn that the attacking is done, and an infantry attack is necessarily preceded by heavy bombarding from the heavy guns behind the lines.

We arrived back at Belle Hélène after a trip which lasted for five hours. Mason was beginning to get worried about us, and was just going to start out in the staff car to look for us.

At about eleven o'clock this morning I answered a regular call to our *poste de secours*. These calls don't often come in during the day, but a huge mine had exploded right beside the *poste* and wounded about forty men and killed fifteen. If it had gone off during the night it would have wounded some of our fellows, because there are always two or more cars there, whether there are *blessés* or not.

This afternoon there was nothing for me to do, so I took my car and went over to Section Two's quarters and had a swim.

September 8

ON the night of September 3 the French started a big offensive which lasted until late last night. During these five days I have had in all eight hours' sleep. Our cars have been running steadily back and forth to the various *postes de secours*. We carried at least five hundred wounded every night, and had to evacuate the same number of wounded every day.

This grand offensive extended over the entire Éparges front, which is about eight miles long. The roads have been simply jammed with long, heavy convoys of ammunition and food wagons. The offensive was very important, inasmuch as the French wanted to drive the Germans

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out of the portion of the city of Les Éparges which they occupied. This they succeeded in doing, but only at the expense of hundreds and hundreds of men. There were three extra divisions moved up here, just for the attack, and in each regiment there were twelve thousand men, and picked men at that; that is, they were picked men for attacking. One regiment was of the Foreign Legion, one of Senegals (negroes), and one of zouaves, or colonials. Any one that has read of, or that knows anything at all about these things, will be fully able to realize what three divisions such as these can do. From the very start the French had the whip hand. This was shown by the hundreds upon hundreds of German prisoners taken every day.

The work was very hard, as well as very dangerous. Roads which never before had been shelled were subject to the most terrible bombardment. The reason for this was that the Germans knew very well that all the roads were sure to be filled with troops and convoys, so they moved over a great deal of their heavy artillery from Verdun and simply showered the roads with high-explosive shells. This, in one way, is what the French wanted, because, when they saw the artillery being moved, they immediately started another attack in the Verdun sector and retook all of Fleury.

Of course all this shelling made our work just so much more difficult. Many of our cars were hit, and one of our men got a piece of shell casing in his leg. However, it didn't amount to anything. Instead of getting some of our wounded at the more protected *postes*, as we had been doing, we had to get them all right up at the advanced *poste*. You see, they could n't waste any time in bringing the wounded back, so we simply had to go and get them. Up at the *poste* we could plainly hear the shouting and yelling of the men fighting. Of course, it was not always continuous. There were times, however, for nearly hours at a time, when things were as quiet as the grave. It was during these lapses that the wounded were carried back

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by hand. None of the wounds had been dressed at all, and were in a horrid condition. After about two days the walls and sides and even roofs of our ambulances were covered with blood. We did n't have any time to clean them. It was about the worst four days, besides the ones we put in at Tavannes, that I ever spent. We did n't have any regular time for eating. There was hot coffee always ready at our *poste*, and when we had a chance we would grab a cup and be off again. Besides this, in the office there were always little bundles, containing a cake of chocolate and some sandwiches, which we would take with us and eat on the way up to the *poste*.

This afternoon the General of the Division here came around to our camp and made a long speech congratulating us on our work. He said that it was a piece of work which we might pride ourselves on, as few others could do it as well. He also said that the *poste* at Les Éparges was on no occasion overcrowded with wounded. This in itself meant a great deal, because more than fifty were carried in every hour. He finished up by thanking us, not only for himself, but also for the men in his Division.

We are all nearly crazy from loss of sleep and the roads are in terrible condition from shelling.

*Sunday, September 17*

THESE past four days have been very quiet in comparison with the past two weeks and a half. There has been very little or no attacking done by either side, although there have been quite a number of wounded. This was due to the fact that a great number of mines were exploded by the Germans.

On Friday a rumor started around our quarters that we were to move within the next two or three days. We did n't pay much attention to this, and were therefore very much surprised on Saturday when an order came in for us to pack up all our things and be ready to move at four o'clock on Sunday morning (this morning).

Therefore at five o'clock our whole Section started off

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for a little town just outside of Ligny for a short rest. The entire Division moved with us. After this rest the Division (the 18th) will very likely go up to the Somme or down to the Vosges Mountains, and unless we change divisions it naturally means that we shall go along with them. Everybody thinks that there is only one chance in a hundred of this outfit returning to Verdun, because, as they have been in the Verdun district since February without a single real rest, they surely will now be let off. It is a regiment composed entirely of old classes, and is therefore used more for holding trenches than for taking them. For this reason the majority of opinions seem to point to the Vosges.

Our Section is fixed up very well here. We are quartered in the classroom of the village school, and are looking forward to four or five days, at least, with nothing at all to do except to take care of the few men who are taken ill during this *repos*. This usually amounts to one call a day, so we shall have plenty of time to make up for the sleep we lost during the past three weeks.

GRENVILLE T. KEOGH<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New Rochelle, New York; served in Sections Eight and Three in 1916 and 1917; subsequently a *Sous-Lieutenant* in French Aviation, on duty in the Orient; these are extracts from Mr. Keogh's diary.



## IV

### THE FAMOUS CONVOY THAT DID N'T

*Crèveœil, The Somme, December 4, 1916*

OUR first few days of convoy running were very amusing. In fact, I think our Section must now be one of the best jokes in the French Army. We left early one very foggy morning, with our thirty-odd *voitures* all beautifully lined up, and ready for a long spin the first day; but we had scarcely turned our backs on the little village before the entire convoy was lost in a fog and headed in thirty separate directions — all going like mad to "catch up." Mason, our *Chef*, took the wrong turn in the middle of the town and went up a terrific hill, while two cars that tried to follow him broke down on the grade. A marching company cut the rest of us off and every car following got a different road.

Two days later, when the majority of us had finally been collected at a small town several hundred kilometres distant, we found a nice hotel and decided to eat our Thanksgiving dinner there, although the date was a day too early. On this occasion, in lieu of post-prandial oratory, I produced some atrocious doggerel; but, after a good turkey and mince-pie feast, the Section was in a mood to laugh at anything, and some of the unpolished stuff I wrote seemed to appeal to the fellows — a fine crowd of rough, good-hearted boys, whose performances have been "a scream" from the start of the convoy. . . .

We are not far from one of the quaintest and oldest towns in France, full of houses and monuments dating from 1000 to 1500, and offering endless material for little sight-seeing expeditions. The name of "American Touring Club," which has been given us, is not half the joke that it would appear to be. It is really astounding the amount of leisure and comfort that the French military system allows officers and men who are in the *convoy*

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*autos.* Of course, when they are in active operations they are in a perfect hell for a period, but when they come out, it is possible to forget now and then that France is at war.

We are quartered temporarily over a café. I have a very nice room with a big desk on which I work considerably making cartoons as a record of our convoy experiences. If we get into an interesting sector, the boys want to have these cartoons and these experiences put into a book as a souvenir of the Section. They would only have a personal, not a general interest; but I am going to make the most of my last two months over here and try to bring together the material for a permanent keepsake of the time I have spent here.

Furthermore, I don't want to go away without feeling that I have done a little for France, which has certainly given me innumerable lessons in the philosophy of living and dying. It is too bad that every American cannot see first-hand what this indomitable nation is now going through, and with what a fine spirit it faces crisis after crisis. France is entitled to the reward of a magnificent future, and every American who has been here will be bitterly disgusted if the United States does not lend all its aid to assuring such a future. We know nothing of true Democracy. The innate courtesy, forbearance, and steadfastness of the "common people" here is something that never ceases to inspire one, day after day. I hope I can return here often and never lose touch and sympathy with these surroundings.

CHARLES LAW WATKINS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Rye, New York; Yale, '08; served in Sections Three and Eight, from August, 1916, to February, 1917; entered the French Artillery School at Fontainebleau, and subsequently became a *Sous-Lieutenant* in the French Army. The above are extracts from home letters.

## V

## THE SOMME — AND COLD WEATHER

January 10, 1917

WE were at Crèvecœur some two weeks before we got out. Finally, about the middle of December, after all the troops had gone, we got our orders to go to Mailly Raineval, near Moreuil. We stayed there four or five days, and were beginning to think we had been side-tracked and would not get up to the front at all, when we got our orders in the middle of the night to move the next morning to Proyart. So we ploughed up there through the mud.

There is a long, straight road running due east from Amiens along which were some of our *postes*, and Proyart is only a mile off it. We landed there on December 21, parked our cars in a foot of mud, and with great difficulty found an old barn as cantonment.

On the 22d I went up with the French Lieutenant to see the *postes*. We went out along that straight road through Foucaucourt toward Estrées. At the latter town we were to keep one car and another at Fay, just north of it. Then at a point called Bois de Satyr, in a little valley behind Estrées, we were to hold three cars to replace the others when they came in with a load.

Foucaucourt was about the most demolished village I had ever seen, not a house standing, just walls and ruins. The street was one sea of mud. The original lines used to be just beyond Foucaucourt, and we could see the old trenches, pretty well broken in now, and the fields ploughed all to pieces and covered with shell-holes. They looked more like a choppy sea than fields. Then we came to a little *bois* down in a gully, the Bois de Satyr, where were old *abris* made by the Germans — and wonderfully well made, very deep and nicely boarded in. Then we went on and came to a cross-roads. We asked some one

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where Estrées was, and he said simply, "This is Estrées!" There was no sign of a house — only dugouts. In fact, of Estrées, that had been a thriving village, nothing remained — it was razed to the ground. And Fay was nearly as bad.

Next day we began work, replacing two French sections instead of one; but it was not hard, and later we took over a third section's service of evacuating back from Proyart. But even with tripled work we had no great difficulties. We worked only four or five days, following to Bayonvillers, when our Division was moved back.

A couple of days before we left Proyart the Boches bombarded the place with an eight-inch marine gun. It was quite a day. We had gotten off three cars to relieve the night shift at the hospital — and the other two drivers were having a time cranking their cars — when, *Bang!* right across the street came a huge explosion. Rocks began to fall all around. I did not know whether it was an *avion* bomb or a shell. Some one cried, "Gas," but I knew it was not that. A wounded Frenchman came tearing into our quarters hanging onto his arm, and Watkins took him up to the hospital. We did not know what it was, but soon heard another one down in the village. I went across the street to see what had happened. The shell had dropped through a barn and pretty well wrecked it, killing a man and a horse, and wounding other horses. It had dug a hole six or eight feet deep in the ground — and down in it stood a couple of horses shivering.

I had just come back into our court, when, *Bang!* again, right behind me. I knew it was awfully close, much closer than the last one, and, knowing that rocks would begin to fall, ducked under d'Estes' car. Usually one ducks, or dodges into an *abri* from common sense, but this time I was carried under the car without conscious effort on my part. I know now I was blown down onto my hands and knees, because my first recollection was exerting every effort to crawl under the nearest car.

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I got up, and saw several fellows appear from behind the radiator of the car, among them Meadowcroft, with a very white face and a gash on his head. He was a little shaky, but said he was O.K., and I saw it was only a cut, though bleeding a little.

It is hard to tell the sequence of events, but about the same time that I saw Meadowcroft I looked around and saw a great hole in the middle of our yard, and two cars that had been standing there had disappeared. Breed told me afterwards that I said, "My God! I did n't know it was so close." I don't know just what I did then, but Tower was hollering about *abris*, and we started down into the *cave*, though it would not stop a shell. Some one said there was a deeper one out back in our garden and a lot of us ran out there to find it; but there was nothing, so I came back to the *cave*. My last impression as I turned back was of half a dozen of our fellows climbing the eight-foot garden wall with the greatest ease and agility, and "Booze," our dog, yelping after them.

Several more shells fell in town — about eighteen in all — and fourteen Frenchmen were killed. They say it was the first bombardment of Proyart in five months.

In our courtyard four cars had been lined up on each side, and the shell, landing between two cars, blew one twenty-five feet away against the wall, and the other fifteen feet in the opposite direction. The bodies of both cars had completely disappeared and the *chassis* were all twisted up. One other car was tipped up at an angle of forty-five degrees against the wall with a bent wheel and a window blown off. A fourth car was lifted sideways five feet, its body all broken in, and a wheel smashed. Later half of Breed's rear axle was found two hundred and fifty yards away behind the château, and other parts were scattered about.

I was only eight or ten feet from the shell when it dropped; my reflex action was so prompt that I don't know whether it was the explosion or my muscles that propelled me under the car so quickly. My ears sang for

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some time. Why I was n't blown to atoms I don't know. The ground was soft, of course, and the shell sank deep and was somewhat muffled, but all the same I consider it a miraculous escape.

*Sainte-Ménehould, February 1, 1917*

DECEMBER 30 we moved a short distance from Proyart and did the old work of looking after the *malades* of the Division. This lasted about four days, after which we had four days of travel — going each day only thirty or forty kilometres. We could have done the whole distance in one day, but had to obey orders. It was a nuisance. Finally, after stops of some days in a couple of places, we made a long run of three days, beginning January 22, into the Sainte-Ménehould sector. The day of our start it got very cold, and has been ever since, ten to twenty-five degrees Fahrenheit all the time. We have our troubles with cars freezing up and have already ruined one motor that froze up solid.

*February 2, 1917*

We live in a sort of house and barn combined. The carriage-room is our dining-hall. Only one chamber we heat with a stove. All the sleeping-rooms are frigid, the dining-place dead cold, and everything is frozen solid all the time. Even my ink-bottle down in the bottom of my trunk froze and had to be thawed out on the stove. My toothbrush, sponge, and nailbrush are always frozen stiff, and one has to wash, if one must, in water with ice floating in it. They say it is the coldest spell they have had in France for fifteen years.

*Glorieux, March 18, 1917*

In our Sainte-Ménehould sector the fellows had nice little *abris* to live in up at the *postes*, dug into the back side of the hill, where they had a fire and kept warm. They were, in fact, much more comfortable than we were back in town, with a heatless barn for eating-place, heatless rooms and loft to sleep in, and a room with one lone stove for a sitting-room! And we had continuous cold weather.

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I don't think the thermometer ever rose above freezing point while we were there, but ranged from zero to about twenty-five degrees. Our cars would freeze up in a jiffy if we were not very careful, and we always ran the motors in the morning before putting any water in the radiators, otherwise the water froze solid before the car was even cranked.

Shortly after this we moved over to the next army and were attached to a new Division, then *en repos*. We made a cold convoy run to Érize-la-Petite, where we stayed one night last June. We got as cantonment the same barn we had before, but whereas then we were much pleased with it as airy quarters this winter it was terrific. It was draughty and cold, and the weather was as cold as ever, never above freezing. It was something fearful, as we had no place we could even put up a stove, and no place to go to get warm — except the *cuisine roulante*, which at best could hold only three men at a time. The village was crowded with 1300 troops, whereas it is figured to hold only 800, and half the village was burned down at the beginning of the war. I slept in the barn four nights and nearly froze; slept in my clothes with a sweater around my neck. My toes were numb when I went to bed and did not get thoroughly thawed out by morning, with two pairs of socks on.

Everything froze up. One fellow had a flask of brandy which solidified. It broke the bottle and the chap had a great hunk of frozen brandy. He would break off chunks and treat every one to *cognac glacé*.

We moved up here into the *caserne* on March 5, in the snow. Our work is sufficient to keep us more than occupied, and, thank Heaven, we have comfortable barracks and plenty of stoves!

AUSTIN B. MASON<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Harvard, '08; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, '10; joined the Field Service March 4, 1916, serving with Section Four and as *Chef* of Section Eight; left in April, 1917, to enter Aviation, where he became a First Lieutenant, U.S. Signal Corps. These are clippings from home letters.



THE PLATE ON SECTION EIGHT  
Designed by Miss Theodore Laffoon



## VI

### LAST MONTHS OF THE FIELD SERVICE

*Glorieux, May 3, 1917*

CADMAN, Gwynn, Eckstein, and I (the California-Belgium quartet) arrived here day before yesterday and were at once initiated into Section Eight. All of us were much impressed by our proximity to Verdun, and by the war-scarred, veteran tradition which pervaded the atmosphere of the little *ambulancier* group.

Glorieux is three kilometres from Verdun. We send six cars there every evening. They wait at Maison Nathan for calls to go to the front or to the hospitals in the rear. Our front *postes* are at Bras and Montgrignon, and the hospitals to which we evacuate are at Dugny, Vadelaincourt, Fontaine Routon, and Souhesme.

The first trip I made was to Bras, about three kilometres from the German lines. The road is screened, but we went up before dark and raised a good deal of dust. We had just put the Ford in a shed near the *poste* when shells began to whistle over and burst a hundred yards or so behind us. Paden and I watched them calmly enough, until a *poilu* ran in and called for *brancardiers*, saying that a sergeant had just been killed and several soldiers wounded when one of the above-mentioned shells broke in the room in which they were sitting. They took a stretcher out and brought the dead man in — his head had been smashed. The incident made a great impression on me. But Paden did not seem to think much about it. The truth is, as I soon found out, the Section considers this a rest sector, and is impatient to be moving out and into something interesting.

*Ferme de Piémont, May 15*

ON May 12 we were succeeded at Glorieux by Section Eighteen, and convoyed past the Argonne into the Cham-

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pagne to our present headquarters. "Doc" Dodge has gone to Paris and Steve Munger is now our *Chef*.

Here we have three front *postes* and three back, or evacuation, *postes*. The advanced *postes* are at Bois Carré, Ferme des Wacques (which is on the position of the front-line trenches of September, 1915), and Pont Suippes. The latter is about three kilometres from the front. One car goes there and another stays at Jonchery. When the car comes down from Pont Suippes the car from Jonchery replaces it. Our back *postes* are at *Ambulance 2/60* at Suippes, from which we evacuate to the Suippes hospitals, to Nantivet, to Bussy, to Cuperly and Châlons.

We are beginning to realize that our change of sectors was not for the better. It is even quieter in the Champagne than it was at Verdun. All we can do is to sit about and listen to "Ken" Austin, "Steve" Munger, and "Ap" Miles tell of the glory that used to be Section Eight's, and to speculate on the great things that we shall do if we are ever given a chance. I rather think that the powers that be have decided Section Eight has enough citations and that this summer should be one of *repos* for us.

### DETAILS OF THE DAILY ROUND

May 27

I WENT to G.B.D. Headquarters yesterday, resigning myself to a day *en réserve*, meaning a day of doing nothing. When Sewall and I arrived, Blake and Burton, whom we were to replace, told us that four or five gentle *obus* had dropped into camp during the evening. The first ones landed quite a way from the cars, and Blake, who was sitting in his *voiture*, had time to duck into an *abri*. The next one landed in the road and the *éclat* knocked a hole in Burton's radiator, and splintered the top of Blake's car.

The *Médecin Chef* said that that was enough for him and he moved his quarters to the Ferme de Piémont, among a cluster of trees, back of Suippes, just off the main road to Châlons.

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May 30

THIS afternoon's *communiqué* will probably read, "Artillery activity on the Champagne front." The Germans found a battery of French "150's" near Saint-Hilaire last night. They destroyed all four guns and broke up the *abris* with penetration shells; then they completed the job with gas-shells. Most of the artillerymen were killed, but a call came in for three ambulances, and Austin, Lambert, and Boardman answered it. Only one *blessé* was still alive when they arrived.

June 5

BLAKE arrived back from *permission* yesterday, bringing a large strawberry shortcake. We had been talking of such a delicacy for the past two weeks, and to have it appear so suddenly was too good.

The Boches located a French battery near the Ferme des Wacques last night. Burton brought one of the victims down. The poor fellow had both legs shot off, and died in the ambulance.

"Booze," the Section dog, was hit by a *camion* on the Châlons road yesterday. After dinner Austin, Hall, Sewall, Lieutenant Bollaert,<sup>1</sup> Pohlman, and I went up and buried him.

*Pont Snippes, June 9*

THE *wagon des morts* has just come up the road and is waiting for dark, so that it can continue up to La Rose. It comes every night about this time, goes up to get the dead, and takes them down to Jonchery, where the grave-diggers bury them in the divisional cemetery. An average of four or five are taken down every night.

June 14

THERE was a successful French *coup de main* yesterday morning in the sector on our right. I could see the artillery

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant Bollaert, the French officer of Section Eight, was killed by a shell at a dressing-station in the region of Montdidier on August 11, 1918.

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preparation from Jonchery. It sounded like a regular battle, but only seven Germans were taken, and no French were killed or wounded.

*June 17*

BILL GWYNN's car was almost converted into kindling wood yesterday, but luckily Bill was not in it when the shell landed. The same shell hit a general's chauffeur who was standing near. Bill rushed out and brought the man in, and then went out and found that though the body of the ambulance had been knocked out, the engine would still run as well as ever. So he took the wounded chauffeur down to Suippes.

*Ferme des Wacques, June 21*

I HAVE just seen my first dead German. A *brancardier* came in a few minutes ago and said that a Boche had been killed with a hand-grenade near one of the *petites postes*. We went down the road to see him. He was a young fellow, with a light mustache. The *brancardiers* stopped laughing and looked at him. One said, "He is very young"; another, "That is what is happening to all the young men"; "And the old ones too, and it is not over yet," said a third.

A lively bombardment in the direction of Mont Cornillet started about an hour ago and is still going strong. It sounds as though one side had attacked and the other were now getting ready a counter-attack. I can see the star-shells over the trenches and occasional gun flashes.

*July 11*

WE were replaced at Ferme de Piémont by Section Twelve and are now at St. Martin-sur-le-Pré, encamped in a barnyard. Our Division is *en repos*.

Most of us celebrated the 4th of July in Paris (thanks to a forty-eight-hour *permission*) and saw a contingent of the American First Division, which had just landed at Saint-Nazaire, march down the Boulevards. It was a great inspiration, both for us and for the French.

## SECTION EIGHT

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Ville-Sur-Terre, July 18

WE left Saint-Martin July 13 and convoyed here, passing through very beautiful country on the way. Our Division is completely *en repos*. We are ninety kilometres from the nearest point on the Saint-Mihiel front.

This is a wonderful place for the Division to rest in. The land is rolling and green and highly cultivated, except for occasional woods. We are on the southern edge of the Champagne, near where Bungundy begins.

There is very little to do. Every day two cars go out to visit all the villages where the Division is billeted. If there are any sick we carry them to the hospital at Bar-sur-Aube.

### ANTICIPATED ACTION AND A DISAPPOINTMENT

Camp Dillemann

(near Les Petites Loges in the Champagne)

August 6

WE arrived Saturday and relieved the English section which was on duty here. At last it looks as if we were in for some action. We are serving the Moronvilliers Massifs Sector, composed of Monts Cornillet, Blanc, and Haut. Since April, when the crests of the heights were taken by the French, this has been one of the liveliest sectors on the Western Front. The position on the hills is a commanding one for either side. The hills rise almost directly from the plain and offer excellent observation *postes* for about twenty kilometres. The last fight here was about three weeks ago. The division which we replaced took the first line of German trenches. The Germans recovered them the next night; the French retook them the next, and after dark the following day kept such a heavy *barrage* on the German lines that the Boches could not get out to attack. The French division lost about 1600 in the two weeks that it was here.

Our front *postes* are at Prosnes and L'Esplanade. We do not keep cars continually at the latter, but two cars are always at Prosnes. We take the *blessés* from there to

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La Plaine, where they are numbered and examined, and then sent on.

August 7

WE have been here three days, and now, just as an interesting time seems to loom up ahead of us, we are leaving for what I know is a quiet sector. We are swapping places, and divisions, with Section Thirteen. We are going to Sainte-Ménehould this afternoon.

### A REPOS SECTOR

August 9

ARRIVED at Sainte-Ménehould Tuesday afternoon. We have fairly good quarters in an alley and a couple of barns and a schoolhouse, right in the middle of the town. It is a prosperous little city, and we will be able to get anything we want, even baths.

Our *postes* are a long way from Sainte-Ménehould, but near the lines. Because of the many hills and the thick woods fighting on a large scale is very difficult in this sector, and both sides have settled down as if they intend to stay where they are for the duration of the war. Though in some places the trenches are but fifty feet apart, concrete dugouts, with electric lights, have been built. The roads run up to within less than a kilometre of the lines.

This is a *repos* sector. The French division now here (the 169th) was in the first attack at Mont Cornillet. In the German trenches is a part of the Prussian Guard, which was also at Cornillet.

Besides this *poste* (Saint-Thomas) our only other one is at La Narazée, in one of the ravines to the right of here. We have one car at each of these *postes* and three at the *triage* to which we evacuate. But the work is very light.

HARRY L. DUNN<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Santa Barbara, California; University of California; in Section Eight from April to October, 1917; subsequently an officer in the U.S. Field Artillery; these are extracts from an unpublished diary.

## VII

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

AFTER it was enlisted in the United States Army, Section Eight, now 628, remained in the Argonne, with front-line *postes* at La Harazée, Saint-Thomas, and Le Four de Paris until February 28, 1918, having during this time very little work.

From February 28 until March 28, it was *en repos* at Saint-Ouen, Corbeil, and Herpont, small towns in the vicinity of Vitry-le-François. From April 2 until June 9, it was in the Oise and Somme sectors in Picardy. It was cantoned at Coivrel, a small town south of Montdidier, and had *postes* at Dompierre, Domfront, Godenvillers, and Le Ployron. It sustained a gas attack April 17 and 18, for which the Section was cited to the order of the Division. The work was very heavy. Jack Keogh was wounded by a shell at Coivrel, and was in a hospital for two months.

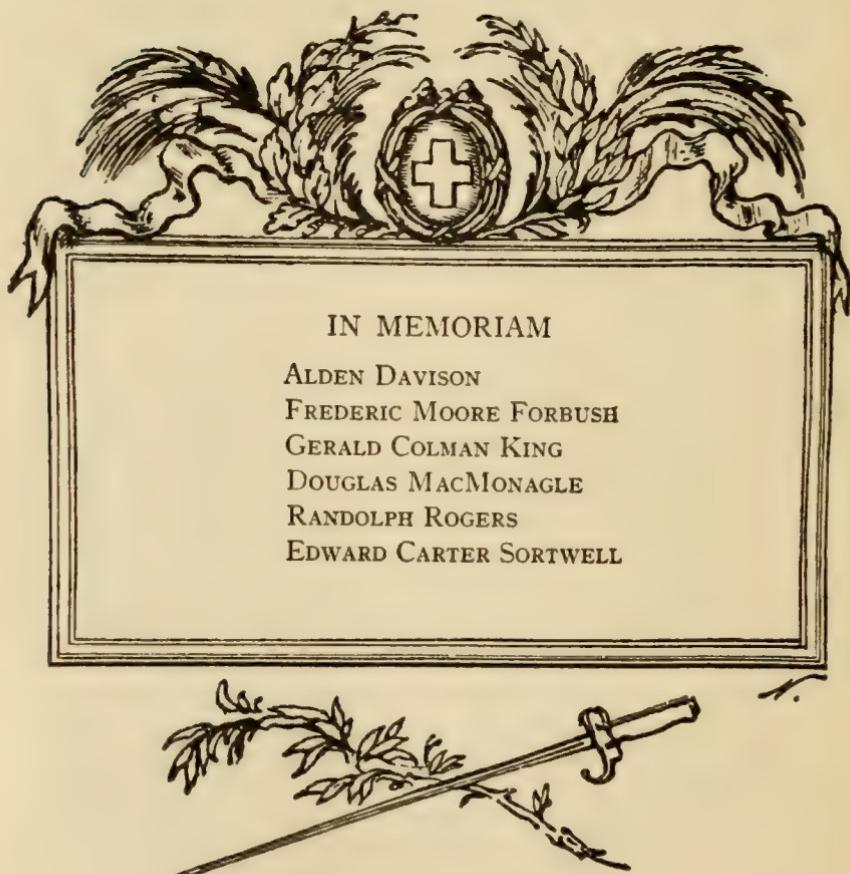
From June 9 until August 19 it remained in the Oise sector, being cantoned at Ravenel, south of Montdidier. The French offensive here began on the 9th of August. The 169th Division, to which the Section was attached, advanced from Le Ployron to Fescamps, approximately twenty kilometres. The front *postes* during the attack were at Domfront, Rubescourt, Le Ployron, Assainvillers, Fescamps, and Bus. The Section's French Lieutenant, Lieutenant Bollaërt, was killed, and Henri Werleman, his French driver, was very gravely wounded in the leg at the *poste* at Rubescourt. The Section was cited for its work here.

From August 19 until September 7, the Section was *en repos* at Froissy, near Beauvais. It went back to the front again on September 7, and from this time until October 16 had some of its hardest work. It went into line just behind Ham at a town called Vilette. Its Division attacked and advanced from Ham to Saint-Quentin, and beyond to Mont Origny — a distance of over thirty-five kilometres. In this advance the Division broke the Hindenburg line just in front of Saint-Quentin. The Section was here again cited for its work. During the advance from Ham to Mont Origny, it worked *postes* at Ham, Ollezy, Saint-Simon, Avesne, Clastres, Lizerolles, Essigny-le-Grand, Urvillers, Itancourt, Mesnil-Saint-Laurent, and Regny.

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From October 16 until November 1, it was *en repos* at Crèvecœur-le-Grand, near Beauvais. On November 11, at the signing of the Armistice, the Section was at Guise. After the Armistice it proceeded with the French Army of Occupation into Belgium, passing through Le Nouvion, La Capelle, Trelon, Chimay, as far as Mariembourg. The Division was demobilized at La Nouvion January 22, 1919, and the Section went to Crépy-en-Valois, outside of Paris until it was ordered to Base Camp in February.



## *Section Nine*

THE STORY TOLD BY

- I. GEORGE R. COGSWELL
- II. CARLETON BURR
- III. WILLIAM CAREY SANGER, JR.
- IV. HARVEY CASS EVANS

## SUMMARY

SECTION NINE came into existence on August 14, 1916, and left Versailles for the Vosges Mountains. It worked over practically the same ground that Section Three had worked over before it, serving in the valley of the Thur, in the region of the Ballon de Guebwiller, Hartmannsweilerkopf, and around Mollau and Mittlach. The Section left this region of Alsace on December 14, 1916, going to Bar-le-Duc and later to Vadélaïncourt and Glorieux, where they worked the Verdun front in the region of the Meuse River and around Montgrignon. On January 15, 1917, the Section was moved again, this time going to Toul. On January 24, 1917, it moved to Royaumeix, and worked *postes* at Saint-Jacques and La Carrière de Flirey. On February 5, 1917, it again moved to Rupt, close to Saint-Mihiel. Another move took place in April to Ligny-en-Barrois, Vaucouleurs, and Éloyes-sur-Moselle. On April 19 it went to Vandœuvre, near Nancy. On June 15 it worked about Pont-à-Mousson. On October 6 the Section changed once again, going to Saint-Max, just outside of Nancy, where, two weeks later, it was taken over by the United States Army as Section Six-Twenty-Nine.



## *Section Nine*

O friends, in your fortunate present ease . . .  
If you would see how a race can soar  
That has no love, but no fear, of war,  
How each can turn from his private rôle  
That all may act as a perfect whole,  
How men can live up to the place they claim  
And a nation, jealous of its good name,  
Be true to its proud inheritance,  
Oh, look over here and learn from France.

ALAN SEEGER

### I

#### FORMING THE SECTION — FIRST EXPERIENCES ALSACE

IN June of 1916, two generous Americans made possible a new Field Service section. Living in Paris from the beginning of the war, they had observed and recognized how greatly the French Army appreciated the five sections already in the field, and they offered to provide cars and equipment, and all expenses incident to the formation and maintenance of a sixth section. They made this great gift anonymously, only asking that each of the twenty-five

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cars composing the section should bear upon its name-plate this inscription:

*"Aux Soldats de France,  
Deux Americains Reconnaissants"*

The names of the donors were only known at the time to the officers of the Field Service, but the nameless benefactors maintained throughout the war deep interest in the work of the Section, and in the welfare and achievements of its members, sending them continually articles for their comfort and convenience. We believe it only appropriate to-day to state that the donors of this Section were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss.

Section Nine came into existence August 14, 1916, and left Versailles for the Vosges. Carleton Burr was the American *Chef* and Lieutenant J. Ostheimer, the French Commander. Three days and two nights of convoy brought us to Rupt-sur-Moselle, where we waited a week, and on August 25 the Section moved and took up its real work at Mollau, a little town in *Alsace Reconquise*, where all the natives speak a mixture of German and French — mostly German.

Our troubles in maintaining the service were caused by mountains and poor roads. The first day, Walter Chrystie's car was assisted to the top of the Ballon de Guebwiller by horses, while my car, going to the *poste* near Hartmannsweilerkopf, simply expired three times, on each of which occasions a total change of water in the radiator was necessary. An hour in low gear seemed too much. However, practice and removing carbon from cylinders told in our favor to such an extent that finally we could make the grades unassisted.

We had six *postes* that required mountain-climbing. There was one car at Camp Hoche, near Hartmannsweilerkopf; one at Camp Duchet, near the Sudel; another at Hoog on the Ballon de Guebwiller; a fourth at Nenette, in the valley of the Lauchensée; a fifth at Treh, the mountain of Trehkopf; and a sixth at Mittlach in the



ONE OF OUR CARS IN TROUBLE



COFFINS IN THE COURTYARD OF A BASE HOSPITAL IN ALSACE



## SECTION NINE

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valley of the Fecht. In the same valley as Mollau we had two cars at Villers, and one each at Moosch, Wesserling, Krüth, and Urbès. Later Krüth was taken off and the car at Moosch transferred to Camp Larchey on the Trehkopf. For such a widespread service, drivers had to go to *poste* for forty-eight hours and then had twenty-four hours' *repos* at Mollau. During our four months' stay in Alsace our only excitements were a few near-accidents.

The roads had sheer walls on one side and a drop-off abruptly on the other. On the outer side there was occasionally a one-foot-high bank, as a gentle reminder that you might drop a long way to the nearest tree down the mountain-side. Several cars temporarily tight-rope-walked these little embankments in the dark. One expert at this game was Judd Farley, who on a certain occasion had to be pulled back onto the road by three artillery horses and about fifteen men.

Our relations with the French Army were most cordial. The Section was reviewed by General Boyer, commanding the Division, who congratulated and thanked the men for the work done, and when, on December 12, the Division left, the General sent us his felicitations. On December 14 we, too, left Alsace. A prettier sight I have never seen. Two days before, the country had been clothed in a blanket of snow three feet deep. The day was clear and there was a real zip in the air. Passing through the little town of Urbès, the Section was informally reviewed by the natives who waved us good-bye. Then came the long climb over the famous Col de Bussang, a passage through the tunnel, and we were out of Alsace. Riding at the end and watching the long convoy file out ahead was wonderful.

### GREAT DAYS AT VERDUN

Two days later found us at Bar-le-Duc. We spent the night at Joinville. The next day an urgent telephone message ordered us to the H.O.E. of Vadelaincourt, and by 2.30 in the afternoon we were there — our blanket rolls,

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section belongings, and all dumped out in the mud. Real mud it was; mud that was like a ten-pound weight on your feet when you walked, and like the most exquisite auto grease if you were on an incline. The French had just taken the Côte du Poivre and everything was going full blast. We set to work helping Section Fifteen evacuate men from Fontaine Routon to the *H.O.E.*, which continued till 2 A.M., when the whole Section was given a load for Bar-le-Duc. This finished our rush work, but for two weeks more we had plenty to do, as we were attached to the hospital.

On January 1 we were attached to the 123d Division, and our headquarters changed to Glorieux, just outside the city of Verdun. Our *poste* was on the Meuse River at Montgrignon, just across from Thierville, and we evacuated to Fontaine Routon, a distance of about eighteen kilometres. Then commenced two weeks of about the stiffest labor possible — not that we had any "red-hot" corners to round, but because it was an everlasting grind. Theoretically half the Section would go on duty for twenty-four hours, when the other half would relieve them. As a matter of fact the work became so heavy that the squad *en repos* would commence about 2.30 P.M., and then officially go on duty at 7 P.M., when we could always count on keeping the motors humming steadily until 5 A.M. Between then and 11 A.M. there were many calls, though not enough to keep the whole squad on the go continually. After that the grind began again and lasted until evening.

Bed was a welcome place after such a turn on duty. In fact, for two weeks we thought of nothing but eating, sleeping, and driving. Any great amount of washing, either of the men or the cars, went by the board. The number of wounded carried cannot be told at this writing, but suffice it to say that in two weeks the Section covered more than 34,000 kilometres over abominable roads. The amount of work, coupled with the fact that we had low-spring hangers and were constantly banging

## SECTION NINE

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flat on the axles, caused crystallization of all the axles so that most of them soon broke as a result, which neither lightened our labor nor our spirits.

On January 15 the Section was moved again, this time going to Toul, where Carleton Burr left the Section for home. Every one, I may add, was mighty sorry to see him leave, for he was a fine leader and always well liked by the men. Walter Jepson then became *chef "par interim."*

On January 24 we moved to Royaumeix, and were attached to the 130th Division. Our *postes* were Saint-Jacques and La Carrière de Flirey. Cars went out every night. A cold streak of weather made the Fords extremely balky. With the temperature below zero, Fahrenheit, a half-hour's steady cranking, often with a torch on the manifold, was the usual procedure. While running, the lower half of the radiator on every Ford was always blocked to prevent freezing.

### SAINT-MIHEL, 1917

ON February 5 the Section again lived up to its reputation as the "Wanderer" of the Field Service by moving again. After packing up in a great hurry and thawing out a few radiators, we got under way about noon, and eleven o'clock that night saw us installed at Rupt right by Saint-Mihiel, where we relieved the same French sanitary section that we relieved in the Vosges. Our Division was the 63d. For a fixed *poste* we had Pierrefitte, which was supposed to keep three cars busy.

The Section shifted its cantonment, March 10, to Villotte, but maintained the same service at the front. On the 15th the Boches shot at the hospital of Bellevallée which had to be evacuated in a hurry.

On the evening of April 4, General Andlauer and the Staff of the 63d Division, with which Section Nine served during many months, dined with us in our Headquarters, when the General presented each "American volunteer" with a copy of a letter, which was really his speech at the dinner, signed by him (see plate).

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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We all felt very proud and happy, especially as the General shook hands and spoke with each of us.

April 3 the Section again moved, and this was the beginning of its famous tour with the 63d Division. Three nights were spent at Ligny-en-Barrois. Then commenced the real tour. We spent nights in Vaucouleurs, Coussey, Valaincourt, Remoncourt, Dompaire, Darnieulles, and finally a week in Éloyes-sur-Moselle. During this tour the Section maintained a flying squadron of four to six cars which made the evacuations of sick and foot-weary soldiers. There was also "Hutchinson's Walking Club." A half-hour after arriving in a place the club would set out to see the sights, and in this way many kilometres were covered in the few spare hours before supper-time. As the country passed through was where Jeanne d'Arc spent her youth, it was doubly interesting.

### WORK ABOUT NANCY

WE moved on April 19, 1917, to Vandœuvre, near Nancy, and served as reserve for the Army. June 15 the Section became attached to the 11th Division of Infantry — a welcome change after two months of *repos*, and we covered the evacuation of this Division, which held the Lorraine sector, and also the evacuations of the 67th Division, which held the Pont-à-Mousson sector.

On July 1 the Boches launched a gas attack on the region around Beaumont, when we hauled out over four hundred asphyxiated men in twenty-four hours, and on July 22 General Vuillemot, commanding the 11th Division, cited, to the Order of the Division, Jepson, our *Chef*, and the whole Section, for work done on July 1.

July 5 *Chef* Jepson went on *permission*, and while in Paris, he entered the French Aviation Service. On August 31, George R. Cogswell was officially made *Chef* to replace him. On September 1 the Section lost its French Commander, Lieutenant Binoche, who was called to special work at the Paris War Office. A tribute to him, which shows how well he was loved, is found in a remark of one

## SECTION NINE

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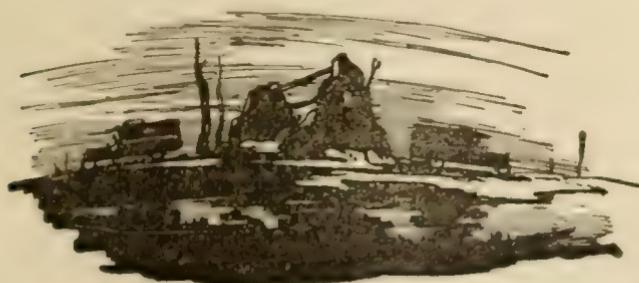
of the men who said, "When Binoche went I felt as blue as when I left my family in the States, to come over to France."

On October 6 the Section changed once again. A slow convoy took us to Saint-Max, just outside of Nancy, where we were cantoned in the chalet adjoining the château of M. Noël, where hardwood floors, open fireplaces, electric lights, fine wallpaper, and a landlord who spoke perfect English, helped to make our stay as pleasant as possible.

On October 16 and 17 Nancy suffered severely from a hail of aeroplane bombs, when the Section evacuated about a hundred people from the Hospital Bon Pasteur and at the same time searched out and evacuated many civilians who were wounded or killed by the bombardment. For this work, part of which was voluntary, the Section received the warm thanks of the officials of the *Prefecture*. This was our last work before being taken over by the American Army.

GEORGE R. COGSWELL<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Harvard, '18; entered the Service in June, 1916, and became, later, a Lieutenant in the Ambulance Service of the American Army in France.



## II

### LIFE AS A SECTION LEADER

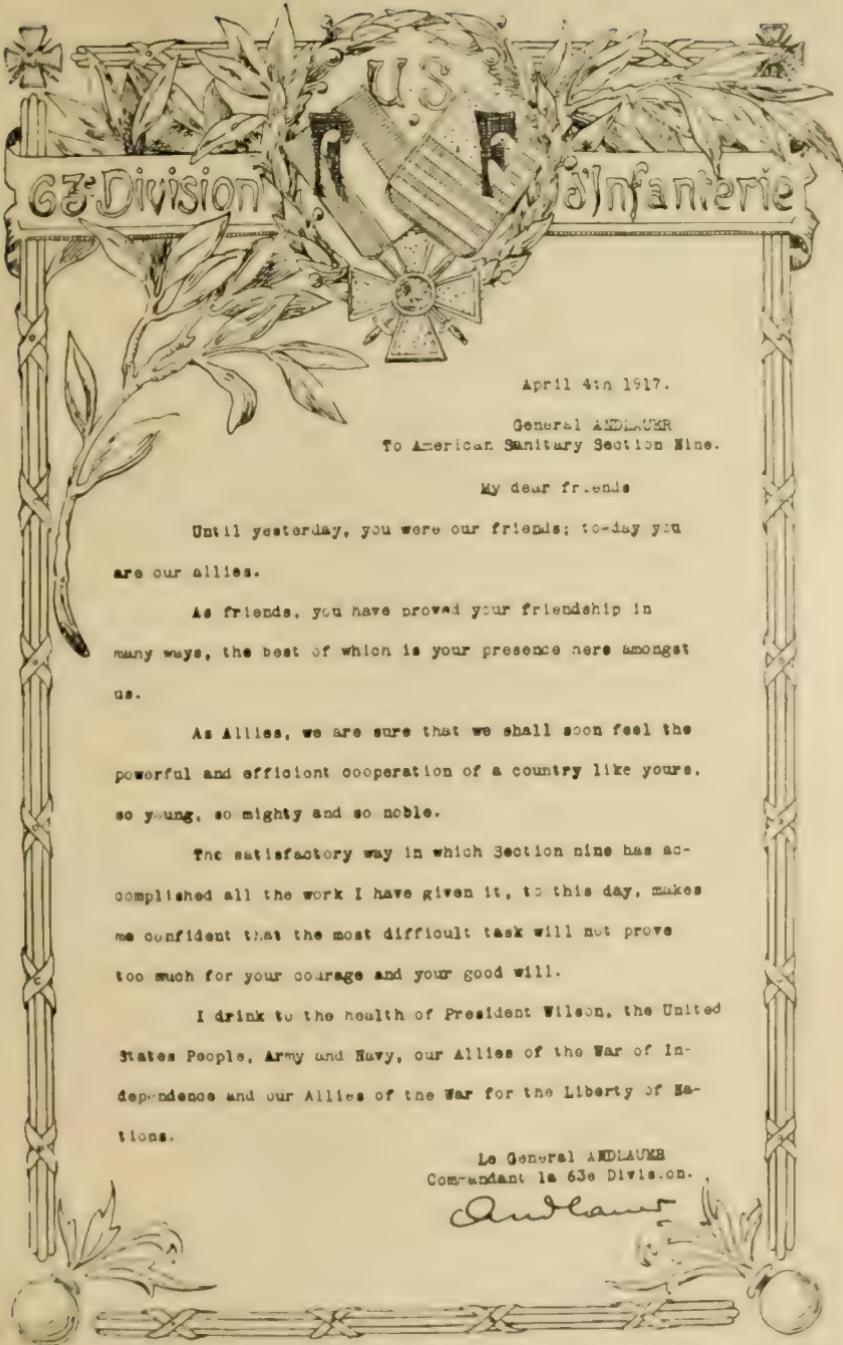
August 18, 1916

HERE we are, as a Section, in a beautiful little town in the Vosges Mountains. With a section of new cars and an eager, willing bunch of men, the life as a section leader for a while, at least, should not be a difficult one. Besides, as an officer, I have thus far been billeted in a private room with all the comforts of home. It has its distinct advantages over sleeping in one's ambulance or in a filthy barn, I assure you!

September 11

WE left the "parc" of this army, where we had remained eight days, on August 25, and took up our position and duties in this town of Alsace on the same day. A lovelier trip than this across the frontier pass could not have been sought for anywhere, especially in the clear, dewy light of that early morning. That same afternoon, accompanied by the Lieutenant of the French section which we were replacing, our Lieutenant and I sallied forth to visit as many as possible of the *postes* we were to serve. These are divided into six mountain and six valley *postes*, at each of which we must maintain one car all the time. To handle this work, therefore, we have divided the Section into three squads of six men each, maintaining, at the same time, a reserve of two cars here at the base, in case of break-down or as a relief if any one of the *postes* should be overworked. Every afternoon the squad which has been off duty for twenty-four hours replaces one of the other two, thus affording each individual forty-eight hours of duty and twenty-four hours off. Under this system the work becomes in no way monotonous.

The mountain *postes* are, of course, the more interesting, as they are situated just behind the first line trenches



April 4th 1917.

General ANDLAUER  
To American Sanitary Section Nine.

My dear friends

Until yesterday, you were our friends; to-day you  
are our allies.

As friends, you have proved your friendship in  
many ways, the best of which is your presence here amongst  
us.

As Allies, we are sure that we shall soon feel the  
powerful and efficient cooperation of a country like yours,  
so young, so mighty and so noble.

The satisfactory way in which Section nine has ac-  
complished all the work I have given it, to this day, makes  
me confident that the most difficult task will not prove  
too much for your courage and your good will.

I drink to the health of President Wilson, the United  
States People, Army and Navy, our Allies of the War of In-  
dependence and our Allies of the War for the Liberty of Na-  
tions.

Le General ANDLAUER  
Commandant la 63e Division.

*Andlauer*

GENERAL ANDLAUER'S LETTER TO SECTION NINE WHEN  
AMERICA JOINED THE ALLIES



## SECTION NINE

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and one must surmount prodigious grades to reach them. In some places, especially along the crests of the mountains, the road is cut out of the cliff with nothing but open air between the outside edge and the valley bottom, several hundred feet below. I foresee that, with the advent of winter snows, driving Fords in the Vosges is going to become an amusing form of sport, to say the least! If no car goes over the edge during the winter on any of the bad corners which we encounter daily, I shall consider we are very lucky. It has been done several times by our predecessors with varying degrees of damage to car and driver. However, "*c'est la guerre!*"

We have been received wonderfully by every one since our arrival here in the valley, due largely to the excellent name Section Three made for itself here during the last December attacks. The sector is so quiet now, however, that even the men in the trenches (as I have already seen for myself) are enjoying a peaceful "vacation," which, unfortunately, is a cause of impatience among our men as they are naturally eager to prove themselves as worthy as our American predecessors. For me, at least, this life is a delightful contrast to that of Verdun. This country is teeming with tradition, and the associations now forming in *Alsace Reconquise* will lend themselves to many pleasant recollections in later years. Of course my opportunities are unlimited, as I am received by all French officers as a fellow-officer. Only to-day, for example, I lunched with a colonel, a captain, and two lieutenants who, collectively, form the group of "*les Officiers de l'Administration*" of French Alsace. You can imagine the interesting bits I gleaned from their conversation.

A good example of the Alsatian feelings toward Americans was shown to me the other day when visiting Richard Hall's grave. In the beautiful little military cemetery in which he is buried I found his grave with its simple wooden cross bearing his name and the legend, "*mort pour la patrie.*" But also the touch of some devoted caretaker was present, for, on the grave itself, were growing some

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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freshly watered little flowering plants. Upon questioning a doctor of the near-by hospital, I found that ever since Section Three had left in January, two girls of the only café in town had voluntarily assumed the rôle of caretakers. Of course I paid them a call and found them just as nice as they were plain. They seemed to consider it only natural, in view of the fact that Hall, several times before his death, had taken his meals in their establishment and that he had left no immediate friends in this neighborhood, they should do this little bit in his behalf. This is typical of the sympathetic attention we encounter at every turn (not that we have selected OUR grave-tenders as yet!), and which feeling, I am convinced, is mothered only by intense suffering. The peoples of Europe should, therefore, gain something, if only morally, out of this miserable war.

October 24

You would be amazed, I am sure, at the seeming ease in which war is carried on, which fact, however, is not so noticeable in busier sectors. Every one goes about his business in his own quiet way, the element of glamour being almost entirely lacking. Very little sentiment is manifested over either the wounded or the dead, for these are part of the day's routine. If you went into the trenches, you would find a group of normal, healthy men leading an apparently normal existence. You would notice much more confusion and annoyance if something went wrong with the cook's stove, than if a large German *marmite* suddenly wiped out two or three *poilus*. Man becomes accustomed to his surroundings so rapidly that even war loses many of its terrors for him after he has been thoroughly initiated. The phase which would trouble you most, as it does almost every participant in a quiet sector, is the seeming inactivity. Patience, in such times as these, is the hardest virtue to acquire. Both the sentinel at his loop-hole and the ambulance driver on his car wish that events could be produced more rapidly in

## SECTION NINE

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order that something definite might be determined. To be held in constant suspense becomes almost unbearable. It is for this reason that the rôles played by the British navy and the French cavalry at this time are not enviable ones. But, to pass the time more quickly we are lucky here in having many diversions. When not occupied by regular duty (which for me is the majority of time), there are many beautiful walks which always reveal something new of interest. Also we play association football and resort frequently to boxing gloves.

Luckily, nothing but solitary confinement can prevent the forming of friendships, and we have not reached that stage yet! These friendships and associations, welded together by a spirit of comradeship which could not be as strong if we were not all working for one common cause, are what make this life such an enviable one.

December 1

THIS sector remains as quiet as ever, but this does not mean that the maintenance of our service is always an easy task. The bitter cold and icy roads are two elements which, at times, are difficult to combat. The wounded men we carry are actually few, but the number of those with frozen feet is daily augmenting. In this sector, nature is man's greatest enemy, especially when campaigning settles down to trench warfare.

CARLETON BURR<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Boston, Massachusetts; Harvard, '13; joined the Field Service in February, 1916, serving with Section Two, and as *Chef* of Section Nine until January, 1917; later a Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps; killed in action, July 29, 1918. These extracts are from home letters.

### III

#### LEAVES FROM A SECTION NINE DIARY

*The Bordeaux Station, December 6, 1916*

THE station platform and the trains were crowded with soldiers, either coming from the front on their seven days' leave or else starting out again after their brief week of rest was ended. Now and then in the crowd one could distinguish the uniform of a colonel or a captain. There were several lieutenants, and many sergeants and corporals. But the great majority were the plain, everyday soldiers, the mainstay and backbone of the army, *les poilus*. Most of them were short and stocky, all with mustaches. The gray-blue uniform of the soldier is almost invariably faded by reason of long and hard usage, his *casque* shows signs of age and wear; he bears a rather formidable number of little brown *musettes*, which are slung over his shoulders and hang at the hips and back, and which are always stuffed full and bulging out with odds and ends which he carries. Some *militaires* had their full equipment with them, rifles, knapsack, and all, while others who were just back for *permission* had evidently been allowed to leave their arms and packs with their divisions at the front. I watched them there on the station platform, as they stood about in groups talking, sometimes solemnly and gravely, sometimes smilingly and laughing. Here and there a soldier's wife, or mother, or *fiancée* would be standing talking with him. Most of the women were dressed in black, though now and then a touch of color would lend a pathetic note of gaiety to the scene. The officers on the platform usually walk up and down in twos or threes, their uniforms spick-and-span, the little gold bars on their sleeves and caps flashing in the light; but *le pauvre poilu*, with his faded uniform and his great collection of bags, knapsacks, and so on, usually selects some place on the platform and then stays there. He

## SECTION NINE

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has too many things to carry to walk up and down for pleasure, and besides, when he gets to the muddy roads at the front, he has to do more than enough walking heavy-loaded with equipment. But, although the officers looked so formidable, I noticed that when they had occasion to speak to any soldier, or when the latter asked an officer any question, the officer always replied with the greatest kindness and spirit of comradeship. They seemed like brothers talking to each other.

### HOSPITAL WORK AT VADELAINCOURT

*December 22, 1916*

THE evening we arrived at Vadelaincourt, the Section began its work of helping in the evacuation of the wounded from the *H.O.E.* Throughout the evening and the night the wounded kept arriving in great numbers. French, British, and American ambulances brought them in. Railroad trains and American ambulances took them out. The wounded were all first classified as *assis* or *couchés* and they arrived at separate entrances. One does not easily forget the scenes at a large evacuation hospital as the wounded from a big attack come in. The sights, the sounds, the smells — the never-ending stream of incoming ambulances, the mud everywhere. Each big ambulance that pulled up at the door brought with it a peculiar and ghastly odor — rather hard to describe — strange, sweetish, sickening, pungent, utterly revolting — a combination of gasoline fumes, mud, unwashed filth, sweat, surgical dressings, and the hot, heavy air from the closely crowded ambulance cars; for the weather was cold, and while *en route* the doors and canvas flaps of the ambulances were closed. Throughout the evening and the night that stream of ambulances kept coming in. As each car arrived the tired *brancardiers* unloaded the wounded under the rays of light from one or two lanterns by the wooden portal of the entrance. The blood-soaked bandages gave ghastly testimony of the severity of the wounds. The blood often dripped upon the stretchers and

the floor of the car. Many of the wounded were zouaves, Moroccans, and Algerians, being extensively used in forming attacking divisions. These Moroccan and Algerian troops wear yellowish khaki uniforms, their steel helmets are of the same color, and their fatigue caps are a sort of red fez, in marked contrast to the blue fatigue caps of various shapes which the native French soldiers wear while *en repos*.

Sad — picturesque — depressing — inspiring — that was Vadelaincourt. The general tone color of the place was brown — muddy brown. The rain-washed earth in the fields, the rain-soaked board hospital buildings, the rain-drenched roads — all brown and sad and dreary. The region around Vadelaincourt consists of low, gently sloping plains, for the most part unwooded, and, as I saw it in December, 1916, muddy and brown and forlorn. Wounded German prisoners were kept in hospital buildings close to the centre of the French group. Unwounded German prisoners were used for road repair work in and about the region. Within sight of the hospital buildings was the military cemetery. We were told that eight months before there were seven graves; now there were hundreds, and every day the cemetery was growing. Sometimes a procession of officers and soldiers would accompany the plain pine-box coffin to its last resting-place, indicating that an officer had died. Sometimes there would be no one but the priest and the grave-diggers. The graves of the Mohammedan troops were all at an angle facing Mecca, and strange Mohammedan crescents and signs were inscribed on the name boards over their graves. The French dead all received plain wooden coffins. Often, when several were buried at a time, a large trench would be dug, each coffin being placed practically touching the next one. The colored Mohammedans were wrapped in a white sheet — the blood from the wounds of which they died sometimes darkening and clotting on the winding-sheet — and were laid on their sides with their feet toward Mecca, so very far away.

## SECTION NINE

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### NEW YEAR'S EVE ON THE ROADS ABOUT VERDUN

ON one occasion my car was blocked by a long artillery convoy which got stuck in the mud on a narrow road near Vadelaincourt. The night was cloudy and misty and dark, and as the road was very narrow it was impossible to keep the two- and three-team guns and caissons from now and then getting one wheel over into the mud at the roadside. Whenever this happened it meant a long delay for the convoy.

From somewhere in the darkness ahead could be heard the shouts of men tugging and hauling at the wheels and helping the horses that strained at the traces, while the harness clanked and snapped and jingled. There were one or two lanterns up ahead where the soldiers were grouped about the mud-embedded wheels. As the convoy did not seem to be making any progress, I decided to walk up ahead and investigate the situation. Perhaps I could see the officer in charge and find out from him how long the delay would last. I accordingly took a lantern and set out on foot through the deep mud toward the head of the convoy. As I went forward, I passed several heavily loaded wagons and then came upon two or three cannon, and then more artillery, and again some more. The tired French soldiers, standing beside the trucks and wagons and gun caissons, looked curiously at me as I hurried forward. I stopped now and then to ask for the officer in charge. The answer was always the same, "*En avant*"; and they pointed up ahead to where one or two lanterns and the struggling horses told of the efforts to free the big guns from the grip of the mud. The soldiers, as always, were anxious to do all they could to help the Americans with their ambulances, and after I had gone about half-way down the line one of them, when I had explained my difficulties, came with me to find the officer in charge. Hot and tired, and troubled as I was, I could not help seeing the picturesque side of it all as I and my friend hurried forward, and the glow of my lantern lit up the muddy,

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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rain-soaked men and horses and guns. At last I came to the officer who was directing the work of extricating the wheels of a large gun from the mud. Eight or ten horses, hitched two abreast, were straining at the traces, while scores of men tugged at the wheels to move them forward. What delayed them was the fact that no sooner had they got one gun or wagon onto the road than another, a little way in front or behind, would get into the ditch, and they would have to take the extra horses and men forward or back to their new job. And so it went. The officer in charge was very courteous and kindly, and said that the convoy was destined for Deux Nouds, where they were to spend the night, but that from the looks of things he did not expect they would cover the remaining three kilometres till dawn! There was only one thing for me to do, so I hurried back in the direction of my ambulance. It seemed to take forever to get back to the point in the convoy where my car was stationed. When I had first come to the convoy it was moving forward a little — stopping and then starting again. The road was at that point broad enough to pass, and not knowing the road, I had hoped that it would continue so. Accordingly I went forward, now and then — where there was a vacant place in the convoy taking it, especially if there was a narrow place on the road. The convoy, as I have said, was at that time making slight headway. After holding my place in the convoy for a little while, as we went ahead foot by foot, I noticed that the road had become so narrow that it was impossible to turn out of the line. Then the convoy got stopped — unable to move forward a single step. That was when I went forward on foot, as I have described, and, upon learning that there was no hope of moving forward before morning, I came back and, with the aid of ten or a dozen soldiers from the artillery train, got my ambulance turned around and managed to get it back through the mud at the sides of the road till I reached the rear of the convoy again. But by this time the low-speed clutch band on my car had been worn out by the friction, and so I was



BREAKFAST, SECTION NINE, AT AN AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE  
KITCHEN, IN THE LIGNY-EN-BARROIS REGION



WOODEN BARRACK HOSPITAL, THE "TRIAGE"



## SECTION NINE

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stalled. I ran back to the nearest village and telephoned to S.S.U. Nine for another car. This arrived soon with Johnson at the wheel. The wounded were transferred to his car and I went with him by another and a somewhat longer road to Deux Nouds, where we left the wounded. In the morning I and the mechanics came back and towed my car to Vadelaincourt.

### “QUELLE EXISTENCE”

WHENEVER I think of that convoy, in addition to the above-described scenes there comes to my mind the picture of an old mounted artilleryman. He and his horse were muddy, and rain-soaked, and tired out. He was just in front of my car when I got in the jam and I asked him whether he thought there would be a long delay. He did not know. He added that the convoy had left Verdun that morning at 4 A.M. and was scheduled to reach Deux Nouds by late afternoon. They had had only a bite to eat during the whole day. I afterwards heard that owing to the difficulties with the mud, they did not reach Deux Nouds till the following dawn. When he learned that I was of the Field Service he asked how long I had been at the front. I told him I had only just arrived a week before. He seemed half asleep as he sat there on his tired horse. His head was bent forward. He roused himself, and, indicating with a gesture of his hand himself and his comrades in the convoy, said, “*Pour nous, trente mois de la guerre, trente mois. Quelle existence, quelle existence!*”

As I came to our canal boat by the banks of the Meuse canal, on my return, a company or two of French soldiers in single file were silently moving along the towpath on their way to the front-line trenches. In the cold night mist they looked like shadowy, muffled ghosts moving slowly onward to some strange doom. Possibly some of them were thinking at that time, “What an existence, what an existence!” Perhaps in the early hours of the night, before they had been ordered to the lines, they had been sleeping — fully dressed, with guns and bayonets

## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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close by — below some shattered *caserne* near the front. Let us hope that they slept well. And if they dreamt, let us trust they dreamt of home and rest and peacefulness. But more than likely their sleep was troubled by weird and ghastly dreams. Perhaps now and again they were awakened by the crash of a shell in the great deserted barracks above-ground — for the guns are always restless at Verdun. At all events, like tired ghosts in blue-gray shrouds, now they moved onward in silence to disappear into the shadows of the night. Perhaps the following night some of them, clothes muddy and torn, and covered with blood, would be carried back in American ambulances to the under-ground operating-rooms in the city of Verdun or to the distant hospital at Fontaine Routon. And others would find that quiet and untroubled rest which had so long been denied them, and their soul-refreshing sleep would be untroubled by the fitfulness and wakefulness of the night before. For the tumult of the shells above their heads would be no tumult, and their torn and tired bodies would feel no pain.

### AT VILLOTTE

*March, 1917*

ONE night, while sleeping in the big attic hay-loft, I gradually became aware of a far-away sound as though a deep-toned bell were ringing. As I awoke, the sound seemed nearer and nearer until at last I realized it was the church bell of Villotte. The church was not a hundred yards away. The sound was not the ordinary slow peals of a church bell on Sunday, but was as though some giant with a large hammer was striking a quick succession of blows on the bell, making it sound almost like the ringing of a great gong. The hammer blows would continue for about half a minute and then stop for a few seconds, and then commence again. I also heard in the distance the roll of a drum. The other ambulance men in the loft were waking too. "*Le tocsin et le tambour!*" It was the signal for gas. We had our orders, and in a moment were dressed,

## SECTION NINE

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gas-masks slung about our necks in the position of readiness. We were soon out, each in front of his car. We cranked our cars and let the engines run for a little to see that they were warmed up and working properly. We adjusted our masks and then put them in readiness, awaiting orders. As yet no gas-clouds had reached Villotte. I shall never forget the weirdness of the scene that night. The wild church bell clanged out its notes of warning into the darkness, and up and down the village street walked a French soldier with drum and gas-mask. His warning drumbeats rolled out and echoed back from the stone and plaster walls of the little houses along the way. The streets were deserted. Doors and windows were shut and except for the Americans, the French drummer, and some French sentries at the crossroads, not a soul was in sight. Suddenly out of the darkness down the street came a woman dressed in black. She wore a gas-mask. In her arms she carried a baby, with a mask over its face, and a little child about five years old, also with a mask, ran along beside her crying and clinging to her skirts as she half-walked, half-ran up the street. They were going to the schoolhouse or to the home of some friend who had a room specially arranged for just such an emergency. The little group were soon lost to view in the gloomy shadows. As we stood there by our ambulances, we wondered if even at that moment the deadly gas-clouds were drifting slowly across the dreary plain and would soon reach Villotte and the neighboring towns. In the intervals when the Villotte bell was not ringing we could hear the warning bell in one of the near-by towns. There was a light wind blowing from the direction of the German lines. For about half or three quarters of an hour the warning bells continued to ring; then they stopped as suddenly as they had begun. After a time we were given orders to return to quarters. We learned afterwards that there had been a small gas attack somewhere along the lines in the general region of Saint-Mihiel, but that the wind had not carried the deadly fumes to Rupt or Villotte.

# THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

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## EPILOGUE

IN my imagination I often go back again into the past. Again I think of those tumultuous times when the soldiers of France fought to save their country and all civilization from the tyranny of autocracy and militarism which the German hordes were striving to impose upon the world. During the war the splendid valor and courage of the French people has been gloriously proved to all, and especially to those of us who were privileged to serve with the French Army in the field; for we can fully appreciate the hardships and agony which France has undergone, and can bear witness to her indomitable courage and her heroic sacrifices in the cause of world liberty and freedom. But in addition to her superb fighting qualities, France's character is richly endowed with love, and with a sympathetic kindliness and a gentleness and tenderness which endear her to all who come to know her. As I have said my thoughts often turn back again into the past. I see them yet, those armies of the French Republic, marching forward in the mist and snow at Verdun. How many of those brave soldiers are now at rest, and those who live — what weird and troubled scenes their memories can conjure up before them — they who have passed through the horror and agony of those long and bitter years!

WILLIAM CAREY SANGER, JR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Sangerfield, New York; Harvard, 1916; joined Section Nine in December, 1916; he left the Service in May to become a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Infantry. These are excerpts from Mr. Sanger's new book, *With the Soldiers of the French Republic*.



## IV

### SUMMARY OF THE SECTION'S HISTORY UNDER THE UNITED STATES ARMY

It was at Ménil-la-Tour, in the Woëvre sector, that the recruiting officers first came to Section Nine. *Chef* Cogswell, John Machado, Alexander Greene, and Harvey Evans enlisted on September 29, 1917, the others deciding to enter other services. The first contingent of army ambulance men as replacements came late in October, followed a few days later by ten members of old Section Seventy-Two, which had been broken up.

The Section entered the Lorraine front, north of Lunéville, January 1, 1918 and moved out on April 20, after having won a second divisional citation for its part in a raid on Washington's birthday. The Section carried 2428 évacués there.

From Toul, the Section embarked on trains and went up behind the Amiens front in Picardy and then up to Belgium, where it entered the lines in front of Mont Kemmel on May 5, 1918. There seventeen nights without much sleep or rest from continuous work were spent, and 3367 wounded were carried in that time.

After a short *repos*, we entered the lines again, in Belgium this time, for twelve days' easy work, leaving on July 9, bound south in convoy, after handling only ninety-eight *blessés*. The Delage repair car was lost on this trip, the White and kitchen trailer having been lost coming up.

Following a speedy convoy of two days, the Section pulled into Betz, near Villers-Cotterets to assist Section 585, which was in dire need of assistance, and then entered the lines on the night of July 17, 1918, at Faverolles. The Section continued steadily forward for twenty-one days without relief, and made very long evacuations. We had passed through Chouy, Oulchy-le-Château, Arcy, and up to Jouaignes before relief came. The Section did exceptionally good work in this sector and was awarded an army citation.

*Repos*, beginning August 8, followed. August 23, the Section entered the lines left of Soissons, remaining until September 6, and then went to the Chemin des Dames, on the other side of Soissons, from September 9 until the 15th; then once again the convoy was headed north, after carrying a total of 1221 wounded.

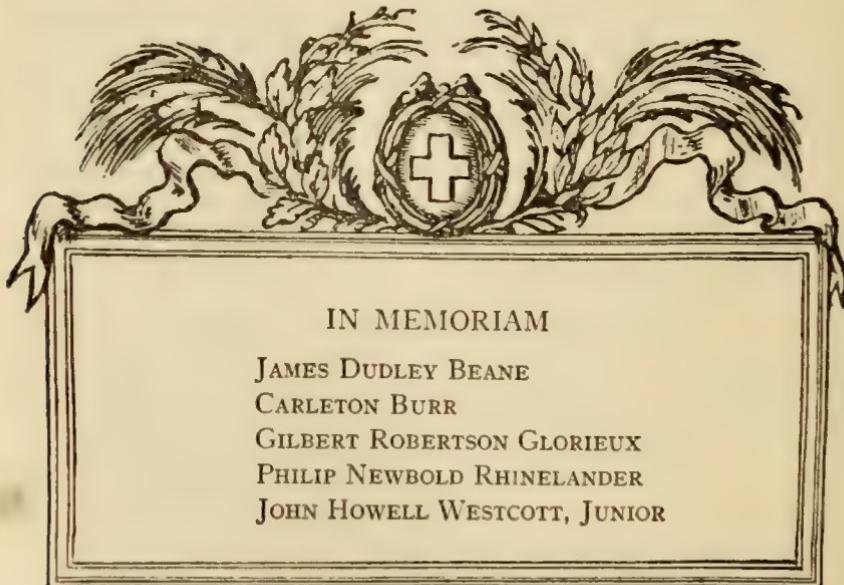
## THE AMERICAN FIELD SERVICE

This was "some" convoy to Bergues, Flanders, and meant second-line duty back of Ypres, at Woesten, for us, before going into the swamps of Flanders at Langemarck. On October 2 we pushed ahead with the Division until firm ground was reached at Roulers, and *repos* was declared on October 17. The final attack of the war in Belgium began on October 30, and the Section was heavily at work at Spirote, Desselghem, and Audenarde on the Scheldt River until the Armistice was signed. Then came the fun, the triumphal march to the Rhine through Belgium, up through Aix-la-Chapelle, Germany, and then to the Rhine at Grevenbroich, arriving there on December 12.

The happy day came on January 29, 1919, when orders came to move south. This was the best of all — down the Rhine to Belfort, France, and up to Remiremont, where relief came the middle of February. After that, Brest — and home.

HARVEY CASS EVANS<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of Joplin, Missouri; University of Missouri; served two months in the Field Service, and continued under the Army in Section Nine until the Armistice.



*Vosges Detachment*

THE STORY TOLD BY  
I. JOSEPH R. GREENWOOD

## SUMMARY

To continue in Alsace the work of Sections Three and Nine in December, 1916, the Vosges Detachment of six ambulances went to Willer. There the Detachment remained for eight months attached to the 52d French Division, and serving the mountain *postes* of Mittlach, Larchey, Thann, Hartmannsweilerkopf, etc. In August, 1917, the men and cars were returned to Paris, and the Vosges Detachment as a separate unit was disbanded.



## *Vosges Detachment*

Most sane, most spiritual, because most sane,  
Upon her bitter road she steadfast shows  
The sacrifice majestic, while again  
Freedom's own everlasting altar flows  
With France's blood; in that most sacred stain  
Once more her own immortal genius glows.

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

### I

#### MOUNTAIN WORK

THE VOSGES DETACHMENT of the American Field Service was formed in December, 1916, at the direct request of Commandant Doumenc, Director of the French Army Automobile Service, to carry on the work of evacuating the wounded in that mountainous sector of the front which had been so well served by Section Three and Section Nine. For a clear understanding of the work done by the light Field Service ambulances in this sector, it is really necessary to have a mental picture of the country itself and the position of the opposing battle-lines.

The Vosges Mountains, rising grandly from the plains of Alsace, presented a natural barrier to the advance into France of any invader from the east. Many of the peaks attain a height of well over three thousand feet above the plains, and the sheer, rugged summits, snow-capped till late in June, offer a wonderful sight for the lover of mountain scenery. Roughly speaking, the French, after August, 1914, held the western slopes and most of the crests of these mountains, and the Germans held the

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plains stretching away eastward to the Rhine. The city of Thann, regained for France by her army in the first month of the war, lies at the point where the valley of the Thur River opens out to the southward into the plains, and it was along this valley, which stretched away for thirty kilometres to the north of Thann, that the French brought up their supplies and ammunition for the troops holding this sector. In order to reach the lines from this valley, it was necessary to climb over the mountains intervening between it and the German-held plains, and this was done by pack-mules on narrow military roads which sometimes averaged fourteen per cent grade throughout their entire length of twelve to fifteen kilometres. Endless cables and buckets were also used to transport the supplies and wounded up and down these inmountains.

Such, then, was, in general, the sector in which Sections Three and Nine had worked for twenty months, and for which, upon their departure in the late autumn of 1916, Commandant Doumenc called on the Field Service to supply other ambulances. After the departure of Section Nine, the French had endeavored to do this work with one of their own sections, using their usual heavy ambulances; but the effort had proved unsatisfactory, and the arrangement was finally made that six Fords should be sent out, to be attached to this same French section — the Fords to do the evacuation work from the *postes* to the valley, and the French section to take up the work from the valley to the rear. Such was the birth of the Vosges Detachment.

In December, 1916, Louis Hall left Paris with a *caminnette* and six ambulances driven by Hamersley, Ward, Nordhoff, Miller, Howe, and du Bouchet.<sup>1</sup> The convoy pushed through to Rupt-sur-Moselle where the automobile *parc* of the Seventh French Army was located,

<sup>1</sup> Vivian du Bouchet of Paris, France; worked in American Hospital at Neuilly from the beginning of the war; joined the American Field Service September, 1915; served in Section Two and in the Vosges Detachment; subsequently enlisted in the U.S. Infantry as a private; killed in action May 10, 1918.

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and a stop of about a week was made at this place. Hall reported to Commandant Arboux, the *Chef* of the Automobile Service of the Seventh Army, and received orders to take his detachment to Willer for billeting and to report to the *Médecin Divisionnaire* of the 52d Division of French Infantry for duty. The Detachment began its service the next day. Comfortable quarters were found for the men in Willer, and Hall lived and messed with the *Médecin Chef* of the G.B.D. of the Division. One ambulance was assigned to duty at the "Ambulance Alpine" at Mittlach, near Metzeral, thirty-six kilometres from the cantonment; one at Larchey, at the "Ambulance Nénette," and one at Hoche, another branch of the "Ambulance Alpine," with call *postes* at "Bains Douches" and "Colardelle," two regimental aid stations at the foot of Hartmannsweilerkopf. Call *postes* were also established at Thann, Vieux Thann, Goldbach, Haag, and Markstein. Most of these latter were artillery *postes* and required little attention. The wounded were taken to hospitals at Moosch, Saint-Amarin, Urbès, and some few back over the Col de Bussang into France to Le Thillot.

The trips in this sector were unusually long and the grades up and down the mountains very severe. On both the climbs up to Hoche and over to Mittlach, the little Fords would be in low gear for half an hour at a stretch, and it was frequently necessary to change the water in the radiator two or three times on one trip. In order to keep the gasoline consumption as low as possible, the needle valves of the carburetors would be closed at the top of each descent and the car allowed to coast down against the engine as a brake. Naturally the wear on the transmission bands was tremendous, and in order to equalize it the following method was employed: The low-speed band was worn during the climbs; the reverse band was used very lightly as a brake during the straight-away descents; the foot-brake was used only at corners and on the steepest portions of the hills; and the emer-

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gency brake was strictly reserved for real emergencies. In this way the bands were made to last for as much as ten days or two weeks, but naturally the wear on the cars under such conditions was excessive, and it was found necessary at different times to replace the ambulances.

### WORK IN WINTER

MUCH snow fell during the winter and the weather was very cold, so that some of the mountain roads became quite impassable and certain *postes* had to be given up. Mittlach, Haag, and Goldbach were not visited from the end of January till the beginning of April. The *poste* at Hoche, however, was attended all through the winter. Sometimes not more than two *blessés* could be carried at one time, and frequently, even with this light load, the ambulances had to be assisted over icy portions of the grades by friendly *poilus*. By April, matters became better and the regular service was resumed.

In May the original Detachment began to break up as the engagements of the men ran out, and by the middle of June an entire new personnel was in the Detachment consisting of Greenwood, in charge, and Richards, Colie, Lindsey, Harrington, Wilson, and Phinney, as drivers. These men carried on the work until the beginning of August, when orders were received to take the Detachment to Rupt, where it was to be joined by new men and cars from Paris and organized into a full twenty-car Section, which was to take over from the French Section Eighty-Four the entire work of the sector. At Rupt, however, the orders were amended; the ambulances and touring-car were loaded on freight cars, and the entire body returned to Paris, where it was officially disbanded on August 9, 1917, after eight months' service.

The work had not been hard, but the driving had been far from easy, the sector being certainly the most difficult as regards driving of any along the whole front, and any *conducteur* who could successfully bring a loaded ambulance over the mountain from Mittlach to Urbès on a



"LE SERVICE QUI NE S'ARRÊTE JAMAIS!"



AT A MOUNTAIN "POSTE" IN ALSACE RECONQUISE.



## VOSGES DETACHMENT

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dark, rainy night was surely entitled to a niche in the automobilists' hall of fame.

The work of the Detachment also varied considerably. Ordinarily the sector was quiet, and the car at Hoche was then relieved every forty-eight hours and the one at Mittlach every three days. The drivers were, of course, always supposed to be within call of their cars, but it was easy for them to obtain permission from the *Médecin Chef* of the *poste* to be away for an hour or two at a time, and they could then make interesting excursions out on the slopes of Hartmannsweilerkopf or into the village of Metzeral and up its surrounding hills. Some of the fiercest battles during the French advance into Alsace took place at these two points, and it was intensely interesting to visit the scenes of these struggles and discover unexpectedly gun emplacements and trenches hidden in the woods. Boche and French aeroplanes were overhead daily, as each side kept a close watch on his adversary, and air battles were of frequent occurrence. One German airman fell in flames in a field close to the *poste* at Mittlach, and shortly after a Hun machine gun, pieces of a propeller, an iron cross, and other souvenirs made their appearance in the American cantonment at Mollau.

### SPELLS OF HARD WORK

THE service was not all play, however, by any means, and when a French or Boche *coup de main* occurred, the Vosges Detachment had plenty of hard work. Picture a perfect summer evening, the sun an hour set behind the mountains and the beautiful afterglow lighting up the few clouds in the sky. The peaceful little village of Mollau is just preparing to turn in for the night. In the distance one begins to hear the rumbling of thunder, and before darkness has finally settled, a terrific summer storm is sweeping up the valley. It passes over, leaving behind a steady downpour of rain, but as the thunder gradually dies away a new sound takes its place — the rolling, reverberating, reëchoing roar of a *barrage* up in the moun-

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tains. Everybody is up and about, for something is evidently doing up toward "Hartmanns." Then is heard the telephone bell in the office at Mollau, and an order comes to send all available cars to the *poste* at Hoche, whereupon the *Chef* sets out in his staff car followed by the ambulances. The run along the valley to Willer is quickly made, but then begins the fourteen-kilometre climb up the mountain. A steady rain, wet, narrow, steep, curving, slippery roads, long convoys of pack-mules, artillery caissons, and *ravitaillement* wagons make the trip up a difficult one, indeed, especially as after a certain point is reached no lights of any description may be used. Arrived finally at the *poste*, the first word is obtained as to what has happened, and we learn that the Boches have taken advantage of the storm to lay over a heavy *barrage* and try a *coup de main*, with a net result for the French of two killed, seven wounded, and no prisoners. Four of the *blessés* are at Hoche itself, and these are loaded into an ambulance and started on their way down to the hospital at Moosch. The three others are down at Colardelle in an ambulance that cannot pull the grade to come back to Hoche. Two of the men afoot push on the two kilometres to the regimental *poste*, where they find the *Médecin Chef* raving crazy because he has loaded three *couchés* into an ambulance that cannot move, the low-speed band having burned out. So there is nothing else to do but for the two Americans, two *brancardiers*, and the *Médecin Chef* to join forces and push the loaded ambulance all the way up the muddy road to Hoche, whence it can coast down the other side of the mountain to the *triage* at Willer. Nor is it an easy task to push a loaded Ford ambulance up a steep hill on a slippery, muddy road, at 2 A.M. on a rainy night! At Hoche no more *blessés* have come in, so the *chef* serves a round of hot tea and rum to every one, two ambulances are left at the *poste* in case any more work develops, and the staff car rolls its way back down to Mollau to close the night's work at 4 A.M. Punctuate and illumine this de-

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scription with a fairly heavy bombardment, plenty of star-shells, and roads which have a sheer drop of several hundred feet from the outside edge, and a fair idea of an active night in this sector will be obtained.

The Americans made many friends among both the soldiers and the civilians in the sector, and many are the stories that could be told, some sad and others amusing, to show how warmly the *ambulanciers* were regarded by both the French and Alsatians. Richard Hall, a member of Section Three, and brother of Louis Hall, the *Chef* of the Detachment, had been killed on Christmas Eve, 1915, by a German shell on the road to Hoche and had been buried in the little military cemetery at Moosch. When the Vosges Detachment arrived a year later, they found two young Alsatian girls of a well-to-do family of Moosch carefully tending the grave and seeing that it was always well kept and covered with fresh flowers.

### GOOD TIMES AT THE FRONT

THE sector was a quiet one during 1917, and many "concerts" and entertainments were given by the soldiery. Always "*les américains*" were invited and good seats reserved for them. Whenever the *Chefs* visited the different *postes*, they were always pressed to stay for *déjeuner* or dinner by the *Médecin Chef*, and the meal was invariably turned into a small *fête*. At Mittlach the drivers were frequently asked to eat at the *Médecin Chef's popote*, and at the different *popotes* at Willer, at Saint-Amarin, at Nénette, the Americans were always welcome. On the 4th of July, Commandant Arboux sent a message of felicitation to the Detachment, and that night the Americans gave a dinner to which they invited the officers of S.S. Eighty-Four, and at which the citizens of Mollau presented them with a huge formal bouquet. The presentation was made by an Alsatian girl in full national costume, and all the Americans insisted on thanking her in person on both cheeks. The Detachment was also host on the 4th to all the men of the French section at an

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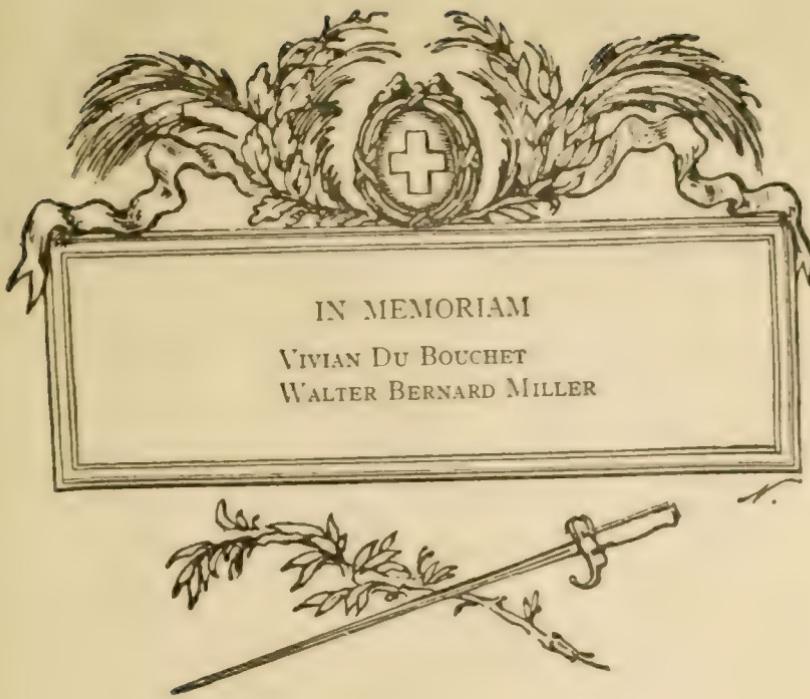
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afternoon party, at which wine, cakes, and cigarettes were served. One of the drivers in the French section was Charliez, the leader of the orchestra at the Café de Paris in Paris, and he supplied music on his violin for many of these festivities, the musical selections ranging all the way from Chopin to "Annie Rooney." On the 14th of July, S.S. Eighty-Four had a wonderful party which lasted almost continuously from 11.30 A.M. till 10 P.M., and the Americans were enthusiastic guests. On this occasion all the citizens of the valley were in the full national Alsatian costume; American, French, and Allied flags were seen everywhere; band concerts were given in many of the towns; and wherever the Americans appeared, they were greeted with cheers. In fact, this friendly feeling between French and Americans is one of the pleasantest souvenirs of our sojourn in Alsace.

The Vosges Detachment made no records for "number of *blessés* carried," nor for the "number of kilometres run," but it played its part in the game all the same. It kept alive in the minds of the Alsatians the knowledge that America was with them in spirit even before we entered the war; it maintained the good feeling that all the French officers and *poilus* had for the American volunteers; and it did its work in the true spirit of the American Field Service — that of helping France no matter what the work or where it led.

JOSEPH R. GREENWOOD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of New York City, Princeton, '05; served in Section Eight of the Field Service, February to June, 1917, the Vosges Detachment, June to August, and Section Fifteen, from October to November, 1917; became a First Lieutenant and subsequently Captain, U.S.A. Ambulance Service, commanding first a Section, then a *Parc*.



END OF VOLUME I





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